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## HISTORISMUS IN ENGLAND<sup>1</sup>

DUNCAN FORBES

### 1

THE fortunes of the history of history, though they extend over a shorter period than some other intellectual enterprises, have been as various as that of any other. From the end of the seventeenth century this project has been closely associated with successive attempts to create a 'new history' as part of a science of man and society. James Harvey Robinson and H. E. Barnes were not the first 'new historians'; as Carl Becker says, 'the "new history" is an old story'; and among its earliest pioneers were Bayle and Fontenelle. Bayle was the most illustrious of those critics who riddled the historians of the ancient world with doubt and suspicion as part of the assault on authority in general, and called for a history, not of kings and battles, but of *mœurs*. Fontenelle, in addition, although a Cartesian found a useful weapon against superstition and authority in the history of reason, in so far as he attempted to demonstrate scientifically that the first step in the growth of rational mind was the transition from fable to history. Myth, he showed, was the natural product of ignorance, and history represented a great step forward in the March of Mind. The 'new history' has nearly always 'enlisted as a drummer to beat the March of Mind' (to use the expression of Coleridge's disciple, J. C. Hare), and has always tended to regard itself as an emancipation of the human intellect from mere story-telling. This is as true of Barnes, Robinson or Toynbee as it is of the *Philosophes*, James and John Mill, Buckle or Herbert Spencer. John Mill seems to have regarded the writing of narrative history as incompatible with the intellectual maturity of the nineteenth century, and his only completed efforts in this field were written at the age of eleven. Writing histories was literally 'child's play' for Mill; it was out-moded in an age of 'philosophical' history. 'We should be much surprised if the nation which has produced a Millar,<sup>2</sup> could admire Hallam's *Middle Ages*,' he wrote in an early review, and he handed the material which he had collected for a history of the French Revolution to Carlyle and set to work on something which he considered more fitting: a 'Science of History'. Buckle, who practised the Comtian 'cerebral hygiene' where historiography was

<sup>1</sup> KLAUS DOCKHORN *Der Deutsche Historismus in England*. Göttingen, 1949.

<sup>2</sup> Millar was a Scottish 'conjectural' historian whose *Origin of Ranks* and *Historical View of the English Government* exercised a great influence on both James and John Mill. The *Historical View* was among the 'set books' of John Mill's education.

concerned, and drew Acton's fire for his ignorance of German historical scholarship, regarded it as his life's work to 'attempt to rescue history from the hands of analysts, chroniclers and antiquaries', and wrote: 'an inquiry into what I call the history of history will establish . . . that during the last three centuries, historians, taken as a class, have shown a constantly increasing respect for the human intellect, and an aversion for those innumerable contrivances by which it was formerly shackled.' He thought, however, that the most celebrated historians were 'manifestly inferior' to the most successful cultivators of physical science, 'no one having devoted himself to history who in point of intellect is at all to be compared with Kepler, Newton or many others that might be named'. Toynbee believes that modern historians still suffer from certain fictional, myth-making infirmities. 'While "History" has differentiated itself from Mythology by making an effort to extract the facts, it has never succeeded in dispensing with fictitious elements altogether.'<sup>1</sup> 'France', 'Britain', 'Germany' are fictions from which historians in the twentieth century have failed to free themselves. H. E. Barnes in *New History and the Social Studies* deals in his first chapter with 'the static, unprogressive nature of conventional historiography'. Both Barnes and Toynbee are historians of history as far as it serves their purpose. 'New History' has always attacked old chronicle for being on the side of established authority or popular opinion — a manual of priestcraft or a school of despotism or prejudice — and the history of history in this context of positivism has tended to be aggressive, self-righteous and therefore essentially unhistorical in its outlook.

The history of history, in fact, was the last great field of experience to be invaded by that historical outlook proper which developed in the late eighteenth and in the nineteenth century in opposition to the positivist *Weltanschauung* and which the Germans call *Historismus*; and much remains to be done in a field which, at least in England, has never been properly cultivated. It is nearly forty years since Dr Gooch deplored the lack of a history of English historiography, and most of its main problems are still untackled, and many of them remain unformulated. Dr Dockhorn has dealt with one of the most important of these problems, and has made a valuable contribution to the history of history — and therefore to the history of ideas generally — in England. His theme is *Historismus* in England: the influence of the outlook and methods of the great German 'Historical Movement', which had begun as a reaction against the individualistic and mechanistic *Aufklärung*, and — though it had its lunatic fringe, its 'regions of bilberries and crowberries . . . its remote peat bogs' in which even Carlyle dared not set foot — was

<sup>1</sup> *A Study of History*: Annex to I. c. (iii) (e).

the glory of Germany in the nineteenth century. The emergence of the historical outlook has been described as the most significant contribution of the German mind, since the Reformation, to the development of European civilization.

Though Dockhorn carries the story through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, the historian who delights in the nodal points, the strategic places of history, will want to dwell for a longer time than Dockhorn allows himself in the formative years 1820-40, when *Historismus* was beginning to revolutionize English historical thinking, and will want to consider the whole scene of which the introduction of *Historismus* into England is only a part. The key to the reconstruction of the historical thought of this important period is the fact that history was still regarded as essentially practical, a belief shared by nearly all historians, whether they remained loyal to the tradition of the Rationalist history of the eighteenth century, or (as in the case of Carlyle, for instance) had revolted against it. History was a relation of Past and Present; it was not a study of the past 'for its own sake', as it has become for the modern academic historian. This latter view has been generally accepted for such a comparatively short time that the historian of history — unless he is dealing with contemporary or near contemporary historiography — has nearly always to recreate an attitude of mind alien to him, and which he shuns when he sees it in action in the twentieth century. He is not justified therefore in limiting himself to the workshops of 'professional' historians — there were very few of these in England in the early nineteenth century; 'books came from churchmen or politicians, and not from professors', as one history of history puts it, regretfully — but must enlarge his survey to cover all aspects of life and thought. He must deal with thought about the future before he can claim to understand thought about the past. In this way the history of history will show how a method and outlook — *Historismus* — which the modern historian regards as 'right' was introduced in a context of thought — history as essentially practical — and for reasons (practical reasons) which he regards as 'wrong' — a common enough phenomenon in the history of science. But he is not justified, as historian, in making a coherent story of the development of what he regards as a 'right' attitude, in painting only the dawn and ignoring the fact that just around the curve of the world what is a mere streak of light to him is there high-noon. For the historian, it is always noon. For this reason, Dockhorn's book is rather a contribution to the history of history, than a history of history itself: it is not an example of full-blooded *Historismus* in action. This is not to say that Dockhorn's attention is narrowly concentrated on the intellectual problem of the development of *Historismus* in England, for he knows that the problem must be related to the whole back-

ground of philosophical, political and religious thought, but he has elected to sketch the whole pattern of the nerve fibres rather than apply the microscope to one particular ganglion. The problem, he says, is: how did England arrive at the complete historical outlook? and he seeks the solution of the problem through a study of the nature and extent of the influence of German *Historismus* in English scholarship. Accordingly, after a preliminary chapter on origins (Anfänge des deutschen Einflusses, Persönlichkeiten und Werke), the book is organized in purely intellectual categories (Die Altertumswissenschaft, Die historische Theologie, Die Volks- und Verfassungsgeschichte, Die Rechts- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte). The effect of this method is to convey the impression of a steady development in all departments of learning of 'right-minded' history under German influence, and it comes dangerously close to the Charybdis of the 'Whig Interpretation'. The reader closes the book thanking God for the existence of German historical scholarship — and this is very right and proper — but feeling, perhaps, that he has only been given part of a much richer and more complex story.

## 2

The tradition of Lockian empiricism has always tended to dominate English historical theory and practice, not only in its golden age — the Rationalist eighteenth century — but in the nineteenth century as well. The Romantic movement in England was not the great historical organum pioneered by Herder in Germany; it was more fragmentary, there were fewer manifestos, there were no completed philosophical systems, it was more purely literary, it had its militant Godwinian side and did not represent such a final break with the spirit of the eighteenth century ('the full light of the eighteenth century', wrote Thomas Arnold, 'we beg Niebuhr's pardon for the expression'); indeed, it has been said that the eighteenth century 'came into its own' in Victorian England. According to Cobban, the leaders of the first generation of romanticism died 'beaten and broken men, perishing among the spears of triumphant Victorianism', though, as will be seen, the anti-Lockian armies did not perish so utterly as this seems to suggest, and a strong Coleridgean rearguard held the passes through which *Historismus* entered English historiography. Scott did not bring about a revolution in historical thinking in England, as is sometimes asserted;<sup>1</sup> he is not the link between the Romantic movement and English historiography. He peopled the past with his contemporaries, using 'local colour' and a sociological bent (which he inherited from the Scottish 'conjectural' historians, who were concerned with 'states of society' in a framework of progressive development similar to that of

<sup>1</sup> G. M. TREVELYAN on 'History and Fiction' in *Clio, a Muse and other Essays*.

Condorcet) to create the historical novel. His philosophy of history, like James Mill's (both men had been pupils of Dugald Stewart), was that of the Rationalist eighteenth century. He believed, to use Hume's words, that 'mankind are so much the same in all times and places that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular', and he put forward this conception of the uniformity of human nature, in the Introduction to *Ivanhoe*, as his defence for daring to cast his tale in the Middle Ages. 'Local colour', as used by Romantics like Scott and Southey, was not much more than a game of fancy-dress.

Hallam, James and John Mill, Grote, Buckle, Macaulay and Scott all belonged to the Lockian tradition of the eighteenth century, and so dominant did it appear in Victorian England that Taine went so far as to wonder whether Englishmen were capable of historical understanding at all. 'In England a barometer is still called a philosophical instrument', and so on. 'A genuine historian,' he wrote, 'is not sure that his own civilization is perfect and lives as gladly out of his country as in it. Judge whether Englishmen can succeed in this style . . . sympathy alone can restore extinguished or foreign manners, and sympathy here is forbidden.' Of Macaulay he wrote; 'he practises in his style the philosophy of Bacon and Locke. With him, as well as with them, the origin of every idea is a sensation.' Bagehot said of Scott, 'above all minds, his had the Baconian propensity to work upon "stuff".' Many historical loyalties are still Lockian in the twentieth century; Toynbee, for instance, describes his method as a 'trusty empirical' one — a subtle appeal to the heart of his countrymen — and it is difficult not to feel sometimes that for some English historians a thought of Coleridge's, say, still seems somehow less 'real', less of a 'hard fact' than a migration of herring or an Act of Parliament. The history of ideas has never been as eagerly pursued in England as it has been elsewhere. In English historical text-books the thought of the period which is being dealt with is often shuffled with an ill-grace into a jumbled catalogue of books, statues, fashions, pictures, buildings, inventions and *bric-a-brac*. Moreover it is only in the last twenty years that a number of writers in England — R. G. Collingwood, Michael Oakeshott, Professor Butterfield and others — have treated of the true nature and problems of historical thinking. Dilthey was not introduced to the English reading public until 1944. An English translation of the *Scienza Nuova* (done in America) had to wait until 1948, though German and French translations were made in the 1820s.

## 3

Strong as the influence of the Lockian empirical tradition has been in English historiography, however, it has not had the field entirely

to itself. In the first half of the nineteenth century, idealism, in one form or another, fertilized English historical thinking for the first time. This influence can be seen in Carlyle, about whom there is much darkening of counsel in the histories of historiography. To say, for instance, as Gooch does, that in the *French Revolution* Carlyle is 'the greatest of showmen and least of interpreters', to call the book, as Cobban does, a 'Hollywood scenario'<sup>1</sup> is to miss Carlyle's whole purpose, which was to try to understand the mind of *sansculottism* from within, to study that devilish element in all men which in normal times is held in check by custom and convention. 'Society in a state of nakedness' is Carlyle's definition of *sansculottism* in *Sartor Resartus*, and the *French Revolution* is a study of what Carlyle calls there 'Descendentalism', the lowest possible in man. Emerson understood this when he wrote: 'You have written the history of a mind.' Carlyle had read the *Histoire de la Révolution Française* of Thiers, and in 1833 he wrote to John Mill, pointing out that Thiers had missed what he thought was the most important point, namely, 'the private-biographic phasis; the manner in which individuals demeaned themselves and social life went on in so extraordinary an element... for the "thin rind of Habit" was utterly rent off; and man stood there with all the powers of Civilization and none of its rules to aid him in guiding these. There is much I would fain investigate further in this sense.' It is somewhat naïve for the modern academic historian to criticize the *French Revolution* as though it were only a contribution to the historiography of that particular event, to use the same critical tools for Carlyle as for Henri Sée or Albert Mathiez; and we, who have seen with our own eyes the thin rind of Habit stripped off, have very little excuse for failing to see what Carlyle was getting at. An American student of Carlyle's historical thought has called the *French Revolution* 'a case-book for sociologists and psychologists'.<sup>2</sup> Carlyle's picture of the September Massacres is not the result, as Basil Willey suggests,<sup>3</sup> of his superheated imagination rejoicing in a display of energy for its own sake and gleefully depicting the execution of divine judgment. Carlyle does not condemn the September Massacres, because he is trying to understand them. What is the point, he says in effect, of condemnation, of pious horror, when the men who did this ghastly thing were not monsters, but men, like you and I?<sup>4</sup> Carlyle is trying to get inside the minds of the actors, to look with their eyes on a world overthrown, and this explains certain aspects of the extra-

<sup>1</sup> *The Causes of the French Revolution: a course of reading*. Historical Association, 1946.

<sup>2</sup> L. M. YOUNG, *Thomas Carlyle and the Art of History*.

<sup>3</sup> *Studies in Nineteenth Century Thought*.

<sup>4</sup> *French Revolution* (Everyman ed.) II, 167-8.

ordinary style of the book, the perpetual use, for instance, of the third person plural; 'we', 'our Revolution,' 'our friends'. One does not meet in Carlyle the detached 'it can never happen here' attitude of a Macaulay. His attitude is, on the contrary, that of Herder, of Ranke,<sup>1</sup> of the true historian<sup>2</sup> of sympathizing in order to understand.

In 1827, in an essay on the state of German literature, Carlyle had written: 'The Germans study foreign nations in a spirit which deserves to be oftener imitated. It is their honest endeavour to understand each, with its own peculiarities, its own special manner of existing; not that they may praise it, or censure it, or attempt to alter it, but simply that they may see this manner of existing as the nation itself sees it, and so participate in whatever worth or beauty it has brought into being.' He believed that 'the inward condition of life . . . is the same in no two ages', and that the uniformity of experience of the Rationalist historians applied only to men as 'digesting machines'. He criticized Scott for working from the skin inwards and not from the heart outwards. He knew that nothing was more difficult than the recreation of the mind of a vanished age. 'The Age of the Puritans is not extinct only and gone away from us, but it is as if fallen beyond the capabilities of Memory herself, it is grown unintelligible, what we may call incredible.' 'Jocelin's Book, the *Chronicle* . . . how remote is it from us; exotic, extraneous; in all ways coming from far abroad . . . And then the ideas, life-furniture . . . of this worthy Jocelin; covered deeper than Pompeii with the lava-ashes and inarticulate wreck of seven hundred years.' Indeed it was only because he believed that certain underlying truths were eternal, something deeper than the expression of a particular age, that he considered historical reconstruction not only worthwhile but possible at all. Because of this eternal element it was possible for the believer to recreate ages of faith (the seventeenth century was the last 'believing' age in English history), but ages of 'flunkeyism', of unbelief, could never be re-lived, because they possessed no enduring principle and vanished in the stream of time.

Possibly because of this rather mystical, 'transcendental' philosophy, and because he was influenced by German philosophers rather than by historians, Carlyle does not appear in Dockhorn's study of *Historismus* in England. But in the same idealist anti-Lockian, anti-Utilitarian, anti-Rationalist camp as Carlyle were the Coleridgeans — the second generation of Coleridgean Romantics — Thomas Arnold, J. C. Hare, Thirlwall and their friends, who welcomed the outlook and applied the methods, first of Niebuhr, and later of other German historians, and laid foundations of

<sup>1</sup> E. CASSIRER: *The Problem of Knowledge*, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> H. A. HODGES: *Wilhelm Dilthey*, pp. 15, 16.

*Historismus* in England, which, unlike Carlyle's, were academic, teachable and therefore more enduring. It is not possible, however, to view the revolution in historical thinking which these men brought about simply and solely as the result of an importation of intellectual merchandise from Germany, because it was not only a fertilization of English scholarship but was part of the revolt against the eighteenth century. As Dockhorn shows, the Coleridgeans found useful allies in their struggle against the Utilitarians in the Germans of the historical school. (It is worth remembering that by no means all German scholars belonged to this school; there were important groups of philologists and lawyers who attacked *Historismus* vigorously.) J. C. Hare was delighted to find Niebuhr sporting 'a feather out of Burke's plumage'. Niebuhr, he said, 'is with Burke and against the *Contrat Social*,' which shows that Hare interpreted Rousseau as the supreme individualist; and Sterling, who was Hare's pupil, said that Niebuhr's *History of Rome* was the first help he had in getting out of the 'slough of Benthamism'. But Sterling might have gone straight to Burke. Coleridge himself was not a historian, but it was the spirit of the Coleridgean philosophy and the tradition of Burke which made the acceptance of *Historismus* in England possible in the first instance. Coleridge taught that party-feeling blinded men to the lessons of history; and it was the Coleridgean vision of unity, the inspiration of the Broad Church with which so many of Coleridge's disciples were associated, which made for an impartiality more valuable in the development of true historical thinking than that claimed by the party-historians; a desire to understand rather than to judge, which Morley found in Carlyle but not in Macaulay, and which is the proper state of mind for the critical historian. If Niebuhr introduced the critical method, the state of mind which welcomed and used it was due in the first place to the Coleridgean quest for 'truth uttered in charity'. It was Whately, Thomas Arnold's life-long friend and mentor, who knew no German, who as early as 1819 wrote his famous *Historic Doubts* attacking the historical pyrrhonism of Hume's *Essay on Miracles*. It was constructive criticism which the Coleridgeans welcomed in Niebuhr, a buttress not a solvent of faith, and which Arnold wanted to see applied to the Old Testament, and it was left to Macaulay and George Cornewall Lewis, the friend of Grote, to attack the 'intuition' by which so much of Niebuhr's reconstruction was carried on. Of the *Leben Jesu* of Strauss, Milman said that the Germans were capable of carrying Vico's principles to absurd lengths.

The 'unity of history', seen in Thomas Arnold and Freeman, is not simply the result of *Organismusedanken*. The Coleridgeans were never tired of contrasting 'unity' with 'uniformity', and from this point of view many aspects of the so-called 'unity of history'

were to them really a 'uniformity' — the basis of a 'science of history' such as Arnold tried to establish, and which would come within the province of the Coleridgean 'understanding' — rather than a 'unity', the goal of a philosophy of history, a spiritual unity, which belonged to the province of the Coleridgean 'reason'. Freeman's is a 'uniformity'. 'As man is the same in all ages, the history of man is one in all ages,' echoes Hume and the eighteenth-century science of man, though Freeman's starting point is the comparative method of the Germans. For the Coleridgeans there was uniformity and law in history for the 'understanding' to deal with; beyond this was a moral progress visible only to the 'reason', and a unity which was the goal of a Christian philosophy of history. They drew a sharp line between a 'science of history' and a 'philosophy of history,' in accordance with the Coleridgean distinction between the 'understanding' and the 'reason', the natural and the moral world, uniformity and unity, and with Carlyle's distinction between the 'Artist' in history, who labours with an eye to the whole, and the 'artisan' who does not. They saw that the historian is not, like the natural scientist, detached from the world he is studying, and that he can never lay claim to an objective standpoint. It was his duty to find the best standpoint, and this was provided by Christianity. From this viewpoint the 'Unity of History' could be seen as something to strive for, not something which had ever been realized in the past.

*Organismusedanken*, the idea of the oneness of all the elements in the life of a nation, met and mingled with the Burckian historic conception of the community, but here again the marriage of true minds is not a simple relationship. Dockhorn, for instance, points to the obvious connection which there appears to be between *Organismusedanken* and Arnold's idea of the unity of the Christian state, but this idea was inspired also by the liberal Anglicans of the seventeenth century, and was buttressed by Arnold's dread of schism in the nation. Arnold's historical diagnosis of the condition of England had led him to believe that in the natural course of social development the division between the 'two orders' of rich and poor would continue to grow wider, and he saw in the Church the only real unifying force in this national crisis. Moreover towards the end of his life Arnold, who was always an Aristotelian rather than a Platonist, began to distrust the idea of the moral personality of the nation, and Stanley in his *Life of Arnold* tells how 'in his latest lessons it was observed how, in reading Plato's *Republic*, he broke out into a solemn protest against the evil effects of an exaggerated craving after unity'. Arnold himself said that he was beginning to think that 'the idea of a strong social bond' may be 'overstrained' and that 'this attempt to merge the soul and will of the individual

man in the general body is, when fully developed, contrary to the very essence of Christianity'.

*Historismus* is one factor in a complex movement of ideas; if the ground had not been prepared for it, it would not have flourished in England as it did. It did not flower only in the world of ideas. Hare and Thirlwall at Cambridge, Arnold at Rugby, revolutionized the teaching of the classics in England, by insisting on the study, as Thirlwall put it, of words for the sake of things and not things for the sake of words. But then the Noetics of Oriel had urged the same thing before the introduction of *Historismus*, and in Arnold their views joined up with the method of those Germans who believed that philology should be inseparable from history. *Historismus* also went into action against the ideas of the Oxford Movement, so that there were practical, as well as purely intellectual influences at work in the history of its development in England.

Vico was discovered in England at the same time as *Historismus*, in the 1820s, and was acknowledged by Coleridge, Arnold, Milman, Stanley, F. D. Maurice and others. What the Coleridgeans got from the *Scienza Nuova* it is almost impossible to estimate, because Vico was the pioneer of *Historismus* in so many ways; but their writings are full of Vichian ideas. In particular they found in the *Scienza Nuova* what later commentators have said is not to be found there: a cyclical theory of historical movement and a belief in Providence, and both these ideas were a support to men who were attacking the Rationalist belief in progress — the March of Mind. 'It may be the case,' Professor Butterfield says, 'that the people who once imagined that the world was soon to come to an end were in a position to discover some fundamental aspects of it, and see them in better proportion, than the nineteenth century, with its picture of indefinite progress and rising good fortune.' This holds for Thomas Arnold and his friends in the nineteenth century. They did not believe in the progress which was Macaulay's inspiration, and their diagnosis of the condition of England was more acute than that of most of their contemporaries because their historical thinking was not confined to the limited regions in which material progress was visible, or, like Grote's, to the plane of political machinery, but explored worlds of experience whose very existence the Utilitarians were inclined to deny. Arnold, following Niebuhr and Vico, found the clue to national development in the class-war underlying the surface play of party politics. England had reached the final stage in which the struggle between wealth and numbers had hitherto always ended in catastrophe. There was in addition a crisis of civilization visible to those who studied the moral and intellectual growth of nations. The eschatological crisis of the 1830s made some impression on Arnold's mind, though he was not the crude Irvingite millenarian

that A. W. Benn, in his *History of Rationalism*, says he was. The 'Day of the Lord' for Arnold, was the end of a great period of civilization.

Though the Coleridgean historians did not accept Coleridge's near-Hegelian theory of 'ideas' working themselves out in history, their interpretation of history was 'idealist' in the best sense for the historian, in so far as their aim was always the reconstruction of history from within. Scott, Hare thought, did not do this. His 'genius' was superficial. The difference was important, Hare said, between the entrance of an object into the mind and the entrance of the mind into the object, and whereas Hallam had made no attempt to understand the medieval mind, Milman made it his prime purpose to do so. In thus interpreting history from within, and realizing the necessity for a great effort of imagination to understand minds utterly different from their own, the Coleridgeans were applying a philosophy of mind opposed to the uniformity of experience of the Rationalist historians. Unlike the latter, but following the example of a historian like O. Müller, for whom the country was a first-class historical document, they considered it necessary to travel. James Mill did not, and Grote never visited Greece. The 'local colour' which Milman and Stanley used was not the painted paste-board of the earlier Romantics, but was used to gain and to convey their insight into the minds of different peoples.

## 4

In the camp of the Rationalist historians, the man who was most influenced by *Historismus* was not John Mill, in spite of his famous crisis of loyalty, but the orthodox Grote, 'the great representative of Utilitarian history,' as Leslie Stephen calls him, 'more of a Millite than Mill'. The fact is that so far as historical thinking is concerned, Mill's 'conversion' and subsequent flirtation with the Coleridgean Romantics did not amount to very much. Mill always liked to think of himself as in the vanguard of nineteenth-century thought, whereas he spent a great part of his intellectual life in the eighteenth century. He thought that the special task of the nineteenth century was the creation of a 'science of history', and this was one of the reasons why he thought that in historical speculation and in the importance of her historical writings, 'France in the present day (1844) far surpasses Germany'. All he could see in Arnold were some 'few and faint' signs of enlightened historical thinking. He criticized Bentham for not founding his philosophy of law on a 'philosophy of national character,' but by this he never seems to have meant anything more than that the government of a country must be adapted to the degree of civilization it has reached in the March of Mind. In this respect he made no advance on James Mill's *History of India*. The lack of

relativism in James Mill applied only to the leading nations of Europe; he considered these all to have reached that same high degree of civilization which fitted them for the best form of government: representative democracy. In the same way John Mill never argued that representative government was the best form of government for the English, because the national character, fashioned by a unique historical development, was especially suited to it. He did not appeal to English history, but to conjectural history, to the 'scale of humanity'; not to a civilization peculiarly English, but to a process of civilization through which all nations pass. Like his father, also, John Mill was an 'Anglicist' with regard to India, believing that Hindu civilization was not different from European in kind, but only in degree. How could John Mill talk of a 'philosophy of national character' when he was in the habit of applying this criterion of progress, the 'scale of humanity', to all nations indiscriminately? How could he use the sympathy and imagination to which he said lip-service, for example, in his article on Bentham, to understand a mind different from his own, for example the Hindu mind, if in the last resort he always judged it by a standard of his own — the Rationalist idea of progress? Progress for the Utilitarians did not mean the evolution of the special concrete mind of a particular people, but an abstract process of development which applied equally to all peoples.

In his historical thinking, Grote's point of departure was the same as that of John Mill, namely, James Mill's *History of India*. It is clear that Grote, when in the 1820s he first conceived the plan of writing a History of Greece, set out not only to capture an important intellectual stronghold from the Tories, but also to do for Greece what James Mill had done for India: to ascertain the place of Greek civilization in the March of Mind, by a survey of 'the manners, the literature, the arts and sciences of Greece'. The historian's job, Grote explained, was 'to survey the general characteristics of society among the people of whom he treats and to ascertain the comparative degree of civilization which their habits and institutions evince them to have reached'. Grote's *History of Greece*, unlike Mitford's (which held the field at this time) was to treat not only of politics but of all aspects of Greek life, not, it should be noted, as expressions of the peculiar Greek mind, but as criteria of 'civilization'. Moreover as part of his preparation for his task, Grote made a comparative survey of early civilizations in the manner of the 'conjectural historians', in order to help him with the early history of Greece, which was obscure, and in order to show 'the uncertainty and worthlessness' of the Grecian fables. The attack on credulity which this involved must have delighted the young and ardent disciple of James Mill, who had just won his spurs in the crusade

against 'Juggernaut', the Utilitarian code-word for Christianity — the anonymously published *Analysis of the influence of the natural religion on the temporal happiness of mankind*, in which Grote assisted Bentham, had appeared in 1822.

By 1846, however, there had been a change in Grote's mind, for in that year he published two volumes entirely devoted to the Greek myths, simply telling the stories in a straightforward manner (he did not believe that they had any foundation in historical fact), and pointing to their importance in the evolution of the Greek mind. 'To understand properly . . . the Grecian mythes,' he wrote, 'we must try to identify ourselves with the state of mind of the original mythopoeic age; a process not very easy, since it requires us to adopt a string of poetical fancies not simply as realities, but as the governing realities of the mental system, yet a process which would only reproduce something analogous to our own childhood,' and appended to this remark (which occurs in a chapter entitled, significantly enough, 'Grecian Mythos as understood, felt and interpreted by the Greeks themselves') a long note on Vico. The original purpose of fixing Greek civilization in the 'scale of nations' was lost sight of, and Grote became absorbed in the spectacle of the advance of Athenian democracy *pari passu* with 'the transition of the Greek mind from its poetical to its positive state'. But though the framework of his *History* is Comtian (which in a subtle way reinforces his propagandist purpose), Grote, because he was the most scholarly of the Utilitarians, had been swept into the current of German scholarship, and he came to realize that the ever-swelling spate of German monographs was making the creation of a 'science of history' more and more difficult. Sir George Cornewall Lewis wrote to Grote in 1847: 'It seems to me that there is too little consensus about elementary facts in the moral sciences for any abstract treatment to be of much avail; and I have come to the conclusion (particularly after reading your four volumes) that an enlightened commentary upon historical data, well ascertained, is the best form in which instruction on such subjects can be presented to the public . . . a series of good histories would be the best foundation and preparation for a really scientific treatment of politics and morals.'

It is in the first two volumes of the *History of Greece* that the influence of *Historismus* is most clearly seen. But Grote was not studying the legends as ends in themselves, or simply as the expression of the imaginative mind of primitive man. He accused Comte of 'that tendency which he so justly condemns in others — the hankering to divine the mysteries of inchoate or primordial man, where there is no fact to light up the dark cavern'. He shows interest in passing, but he is at pains to show, in the preface to the first two volumes, that he is merely passing. In some of his apolo-

getic remarks one seems to feel the chill breath of James Mill down Grote's back. He wrote to John Mill that it was repugnant to him to publish the first two volumes alone, with so little 'real history' in them. As regards the rest of the work it is difficult to ignore the conclusion of Hugh Walker, who thought that 'while Thirlwall was in the current of German influence, Grote's thought was English in its source . . .' The most that can be said is that Grote utilized German monographs.

## 5

*Historismus* in England was not the great historical and philosophical movement it was in Germany. English historians who were influenced by German scholarship were not prone to philosophize, and English philosophers generally were not interested in *Historismus*. Buckle's enormous success is damning proof of the backwardness of England in the historical movement, at least in the mid-nineteenth century. We have not had the unbroken, swelling tradition, the heroes or the pioneers. As Dockhorn says, England had no Hegel and Schelling, no Humboldt and Niebuhr, no Savigny and Grimm, no Ranke . . . But though we also have had our regions of bilberries, we have not had a Spengler, and perhaps we ought to thank Locke for that. Or are the Buckles and Toynbees more dangerous than the Spenglers? Few Englishmen are taken in by the latter, but the appeal to trusty empiricism is almost irresistible. The best antidote, perhaps, is the history of history; because, among other things, it reveals the thoroughly untrustworthy and chameleon-like nature of most of the world's historical thinking, which changes its coat with the climate and surroundings. For this reason, it is an excellent discipline for historians.

## ELIZABETHAN SPOKEN ENGLISH

MAURICE EVANS

## 1

THE language of Elizabethan literature has received much attention in recent years; it may be of value, therefore, to attempt a study of English as it was normally spoken in the everyday life of the period, since this must have conditioned the written language in some degree. There is no point in turning to the drama for information since the written word is clearly differentiated from the spoken, and dramatic prose is subject to almost as elaborate a series of conventions as dramatic poetry. For really authentic speech it is necessary to go to contemporary sources which report it verbatim, and fortunately there are plenty of these available — parliamentary debates, state trials for high treason, star chamber cases and all variety of proceedings in ecclesiastical courts in every part of the country. In these can be found a more or less accurate account of the speeches of Lords, Puritans, Jesuits or common village artisans.

Parliamentary debates are perhaps not ordinary speech, but they are far more spontaneous than might be expected. They usually begin with a very formal speech by the Speaker or by the propounder of a new bill, but rapidly develop as the House warms up, and not infrequently end in violent bickering, as in the long debate over Monopolies in 1601, when Cecil had to silence the confusion. A single typical illustration will show the extent of informality in Parliamentary speech: 'Sir Edward Hobie said "we cannot hear you speak out, you should speak standing so the House might the better hear you"'. So Sir Walter Raleigh said that being a Committee he might speak either sitting or standing.' The method by which these accounts were compiled is indicated by a note in Heywood Townshend's edition of parliamentary debates: 'Mr Glassocke and Mr Spicer and divers others made several speeches, but because it grew dark I could not write them.'<sup>1</sup>

We can trust the accuracy of the trials because they were for the most part taken down verbatim in the Court room. 'Sir Charles Caesar spoke soe little and with so loe a voice that I could not heare him,' writes the recorder; and of Lady Frances Howard, 'I can much aggravate but nothing extenuate my fault . . . (This she spake humbly and fearfully and so low the Lord Steward could not

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Collections*. 'An exact account of the Proceedings of the Four Last Parliaments of Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory . . .' by HEYWOOD TOWNSHEND Esq., London, 1680, p. 319.

hear it but the Attorney related it.)' Occasionally, of course, the trials were written up afterwards, especially by the Puritans and Quakers who wished to put their sufferings on record. We can see how they polish up their own arguments and give their own scripture quotations in full while only giving the reference for those of their opponents. There is often a suspicious superiority about their arguments which puts one on one's guard and is easy to detect.

The set rhetorical speeches were of course prepared and written down beforehand, as we can see from the title of a pamphlet such as the following: 'The Charge of the Attorney General Sir Francis Bacon against Frances, Countess of Somerset, intended to have been spoken by him at her arraignment on Friday, May 24th, 1616, in case she had pleaded Not Guilty.' The pleadings of the prisoners, in cases of High Treason at least, would, however, appear to be extempore. The procedure was to allow the accused no preparation or warning of the charges against him, and no counsel; for a man was guilty until proved innocent and therefore anything in his favour was naturally against the Crown. Consequently, the perpetual lament of the prisoners is that they have no pen and ink, no notes or knowledge of the evidence and accusations against them. They were simply faced with a series of depositions relating to the most varied and distant events and, when the whole case against them had been presented, they were allowed to answer any points which they might remember. Abington asks, 'I beseech your Honours I may have a pair of writing tables to set down what is alleged against me,' to which Hatton replied, 'When you hear anything you are desirous to answer, you shall speak in answer at full, which is better than a pair of tables.'<sup>1</sup> And Car, Earl of Somerset, was allowed to make notes as a special concession to his rank; 'And though it be not the ordinary custom, you shall have pen and ink to aid your memory.'<sup>2</sup>

But although the pleadings were extempore, it may be suggested that they were scarcely normal English, for High Treason was a capital offence, and a man pleading for his life would be unusually careful of his words. Yet during the course of a trial lasting over many days, the speakers inevitably lapsed into ordinary speech whether they would or no. We can see, for instance, how the prisoners attempted to anticipate the charges by preparing speeches beforehand, and how their style lapsed and became less elegant when an unexpected piece of evidence was produced. In addition, there is the clearest contrast between the formal rhetoric of the official accusations and the plain conversational speech which the

<sup>1</sup> *State Trials*, Vol. II. Cobbett's complete collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and other crimes and misdemeanours.

<sup>2</sup> *State Trials*, Vol. II, No. 109, Col. 968.

Judge and Lawyers use in the middle of the trial, when their set piece is done.

As for the more informal trials, there is little doubt that they contain generally extempore speech, often being in the nature of arguments between the Judge and the accused. We find in them, too, quantities of illiterate speech, obviously authentic, which in one case bursts out of the surrounding Latin by the very violence of its own feeling.

Thomas Nash perturbator divinorum et objurgator — viz proferens verba praeterita in die sancti Petri et in festo Epiphanie Domini in Angliis. What be you but horis, harlatts et bawds.<sup>1</sup>

The sources are therefore sufficiently authentic to make a closer examination worth while, and I shall attempt to illustrate various aspects of Elizabethan speech by a selection of passages which it will of course be necessary to quote at length.

## 2

Lower-class, uneducated speech may be considered first. The ecclesiastical trials cover many aspects of village life and there are accounts of quarrels over precedence in church, illegitimate children, breach of promise, and even such charges as 'converting the surplisse into shirts and other prophane uses' or hanging up washing in the church to dry. It is in the nature of such occasions to arouse violence of language, but even so, our first impression of colloquial speech is of its unusually explosive quality. The speakers generally seem to be quarrelling and calling each other knaves or whores, to mention only the politer epithets:

'Thou shalt scale no door here. Go thy way stynking knave: ye be but brybors and knaves everych one of yow,'<sup>2</sup> goes one report of speech, or:

'She wished the pox to light upon her and named her powde Jinny, powde flurt . . . saide unto her she was a great fat-tailed sow,'<sup>3</sup> or finally:

'He singeth the psalmes in the church with such a jesticulous tone and altitonant voyce, viz. squeakinge like a gelded pigg which doth not onlie interrupt the other voyces but is altogether dissonant and disagreeing unto any musicall harmonie.'<sup>4</sup>

With this abusive power is coupled a fine command of picturesque words and phrases to which Nash was undoubtedly indebted for some of his colloquial vigour. To quote a few instances:

<sup>1</sup> *Commissary Court of London*, CIV (A Series of Precedents and Proceedings in criminal cases. W. HALE, 1847).

<sup>2</sup> *Commissary Court of London*: HALE, CCXIII.

<sup>3</sup> *State Trials*, vol. II. Mary Smith Col. 1054 (HALES), No. 112.

<sup>4</sup> *Court of Archdeaconry of Essex*, DCCXLII. HALE, op. cit.

'I hope to see his bones hanged at a horse tayll and the doggs runne through his puddins,'<sup>1</sup> or

'He rayled on the ministers and sides-man calling Protestants pratlingstantes',<sup>2</sup> 'Saying he was a covetous snowge',<sup>3</sup> or 'Pricklouse that thou art'.<sup>4</sup>

The speakers seem to have had a Cockney sense of humour and a ready gift of repartee, as we can see from the remarks of a man whose cock had been stolen:

'I wolde I shuld or could hear my cock crowe upon fastens-even in their bellies that stoll him,'<sup>5</sup> or, an example of sectarian malice:

'I hope to see the church downe and the priests buried in their surplices, for I knowe noe good they do but are a great charge to the parish in washing them.'<sup>6</sup>

Such a language has great dramatic qualities and is capable of considerable variation in tone. An example such as the following creates a complete scene of itself and shows the speaker haranguing her opponents in turn with a different line of attack for each one:

'What, doe you keepe courtes in everie corner of the house? I see you do it to intrap and force him to sweare that which is not truth. You doe him injustice and wrong and you are not able to justifie your doings. And as for you, doe I not know you? Yes, well enough. I know what you both intend. It is but a money matter and you do him wrong.'<sup>7</sup>

One can imagine some Elizabethan Mrs Poyser delivering the attack with overwhelming sarcasm. Under the stress of emotion this colloquial language can attain a remarkable intensity. The cries of a boy described in a Yorkshire witch trial are expressive of fear to an uncomfortable degree:

'Looke where she is, take hold of her, for God's sake shut the door and take her, she cannot escape away; looke about for her and lay hold on her for she is in the house. Jannet Preston lyes heavie upon me, Preston's wife lies heavy upon me, helpe me, helpe me.'<sup>8</sup> The short staccato sentences clearly convey the agony of mind which the victim suffered. In short stretches uneducated English can indeed rise to a level little short of sublimity. There is great emotional content in a single sentence such as, 'As this candill doth voad and

<sup>1</sup> *Depositions from York Castle*, LXXXV (Surtees Soc.), 1861.

<sup>2</sup> *Court of Archdeaconry of Essex*, DXI (HALE).

<sup>3</sup> *Ecclesiastical Proceedings of Courts of Durham*, CXLIV (Surtees Soc.).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, CCCXXXVI.

<sup>5</sup> *Ecclesiastical Proceedings of Courts of Durham*, CVII (Surtees Soc.).

<sup>6</sup> *Depositions of York Castle*, CCXIX.

<sup>7</sup> *Acts of High Commission in Durham Diocese*: WILLIAM MEADE (12) (Surtees Soc.).

<sup>8</sup> 'Witches at Yorke' (*Lancaster Witches*: G. B. HARRISON).

goeth out, lyke wyse my soole shall goe and ascend to hevyn,'<sup>1</sup> while the confession of a Yorkshire witch has almost the quality of the ballad in the cruelty of its statement and the sudden concrete religious image at the end:

'I lead him up and down the moor with an intention he should either have broak his neck or have drowned himself: but at last his horse threw him and hee then went over the bridge and I had a foot in. How he goot over the bridge I cannot tell, except the Lord lead him by the hand. I had him not at that time.'<sup>2</sup>

But the common language does not sustain a high level for any length of time, and narrative speech is almost invariably formless. The organization of syntax and the logical construction of speech belongs, as might be expected, to the educated, and the villagers are only too often puerile in their longer depositions. The following speech of a boy who was pretending to be possessed of a devil is very typical in its absence of emphasis and complete lack of control:

'Being at Saint James, there came unto me a thing like a dog and said unto me, and if I wold consent unto him and say that I was a counterfeit, he wold give me a bag of gold, and if I wold not he wold make me be hanged or else he wold tear me in pieces, and if I wold, I shold do anything that I wold take in hand, and he wold come to me like a mouse and help me. And then cam to me a thing like an ass and said that if I wold not say that I was a counterfeit, he wold cast me into a well, and so went away. And Nicholas shepherd said if I were in a fit again he wold fetch a pair of knipknaps and a rope and he wold make me confess.'<sup>3</sup>

## 3

When we ascend the social scale and examine trials of the nobility or speeches in Parliament, we find at once a similarity and a difference. The vigorous colloquial power is still apparent, and there are plenty of illustrations, of pithy similitudes or bold and earthy jests which have their origin in the speech of common men. Bale in his *Vocacyon* repeats some pleasantly coarse remarks which he overheard, if we may believe him, from a Catholic priest who went fishing with the Communion Bread for bait:

'Yes by the Masse I did (sayde the preste again) and made the fyshes more holy than ever the whoresons were afore, for I sent my maker amongst them whom I had that day received at the aultar.'<sup>4</sup>

The trial of Sir John Perrot in 1592, of which there is unfortunately

<sup>1</sup> *Court of Commissary of London*, CXXXV (HALES).

<sup>2</sup> *Depositions from Yorke Castle*, CXCv.

<sup>3</sup> Somers Tracts. *Lancashire Witches*, III, p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> *Vocacyon of Johan Bale*. Harleian, VI.

all too short an account, reveals some good choleric prose on the part of the accused:

'If it were not for yonder pild and paltry sword that lieth in the window I would not brook these comparisons,' he says, or

'This fiddling woman troubles me out of measure, God's wounds, he shall not have the office . . . God's lady dear, I shall be her white boy again . . .'<sup>1</sup> And similarly Ogilvie, a papist examined in 1615, challenges his judges in no uncertain terms:

'As for your acts of Parliament, they are made by a number of partial men, the best of the land not agreeing with them . . . for which I will not give a rotten fig . . . If the King . . . play the runnagate from God as he and you all do, I will not acknowledge him more than this old hat.'<sup>2</sup>

Unlike low class speech, however, educated Elizabethan English is remarkable for its flexibility and clarity. It is a most adequate language and says what it has to say with simplicity and directness, qualities illustrated by the following very modern passage from Norfolk's defence against a charge of treason:

'My memory is too weak to answer to a heap of matters huddled up I know not how, having nothing but truth and ignorance to support me: and you are four of the Queen's Council, who have notes and the faculty of flourishing upon them: and it is hard for me to answer all of a sudden, and I may through defect of memory and the surprise of an accused innocence, omit that which might be easily answered. It was very unlikely and extremely untrue that I should deal with the Pope: I had rather be drawn in pieces with wild horses than change from the faith which I was brought up in from my youth; and for landing an army at Harwich, it is well known how impossible it is for an army to march in that country which is all ditches and woods. If I had designed such a matter, I would have made provision for arms and powder: I have not bestowed ten pounds on any armour these ten years, except it were eight corselets of proof: I have no cullivers in my house and I am sure not three barrels of powder.'<sup>3</sup>

The Archbishop of Canterbury's account of the fantastic proceedings in the divorce of Essex shows a similar directness in a more conversational setting. The King wished the proceedings to go through quickly and sent his Advocate to facilitate their progress; but the Archbishop stood stiffly to his principles and gives an amusing account of his battles with the intruder:

'He snapped up my lord's counsel, that they could not speak a word but he caught it before it was out. "I know what you will say" when indeed he knew not, neither was it any such matter as he

<sup>1</sup> *State Trials*, I, 1592, Column 1318, No. 69.

<sup>2</sup> *State Trials*, vol. II, 1615, Ogilvie, Column 892, No. 101.

<sup>3</sup> *Arraignment of Norfolk, 1570*. Harleian, VI, 418-19.

imagined. "I tell you Dr. Bennet I have as much law as you, I am as good a lawyer as you are." To which the Archbishop replied, "No, Your Lordship thinketh that because you have read two or three chapters of the canon law about this late business, you know as much as we do, who have spent all our lives in that profession. I tell your Lordship I have studied the law two and thirty years, and therefore you shall give me leave to believe that I know more therein than you can".<sup>1</sup>

If we examine the debates in Parliament, we find the same easy flow of speech. Walter Raleigh is especially fluent and clear as a speaker. Propounding a plan to beat Philip he says:

'At this coming he fully determineth to get Plymouth, or at least, to possess some of the Havens this summer within our land. And Plymouth is a place of most danger, for no ordinance can be carried thither to remove him, the passages will not give leave. Now the way to defeat him is this, to send a Royal Army to supplant him in Brittany and to possess ourselves there: and to send a strong navy to sea and to lye with it upon the Cape and such places as his ships bring riches to, that they may set upon all that come.'<sup>2</sup>

He is equally direct and lucid when describing how tin is mined in the Cornish mines, over which he had a monopoly:

'When the Tinn is taken out of the mine and melted and refined, then is every piece containing one hundred weight sealed with the Duke's seal. Now I will tell you that before the granting of my Patent, whether Tinn were but of seventeen shillings and so upwards to fifty shillings a hundred, yet the Poor workmen never had above two shillings the week, finding themselves. But since my Patent, whosoever will work, may: and buy Tinn at what price soever, they have four shillings a week truly paid.'<sup>3</sup>

Many speakers besides Raleigh consistently reach this standard of easy, clear statement. It is to be expected that such a quality would be accompanied by a capacity for argument, and here the spoken is ahead of the written word. There is an admirably lucid argument by Frowick Grevil in Parliament on the subject of Precedent which shows how clearly the Elizabethan could put a case: 'For Precedents they are but examples of things past,' he says. 'Now every example ought to be stronger than the thing we fear: for if the thing be otherwise and our necessity greater, the former doings are no rules to us. And so Precedents as they are not to be rejected, so they ought not to be Eternal.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *State Trials*, vol. II, Divorce of Essex, No. 96, Column 837-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Commons Journals*, 1592-93 (p. 484). The Journals of all the Parliaments during the reign of Queen Elizabeth collected by Sir Simonds D'Ewes, 1682.

<sup>3</sup> *Commons Journals*, 1601 (646).

<sup>4</sup> *Commons Journals*, 1592-93 (490).

The well known argument about God and the soul between Raleigh and Mr Ironsides is of course another example of this quality of Elizabethan speech.<sup>1</sup>

As a medium for the expression of emotion, and hence as a source of dramatic language, the English of educated Elizabethans shows great potentialities. We can find in the accounts of trials and debates an enormous range of moods forcefully expressed by the flexible rhythms of speech; irony, anger, fear, a tedious discursiveness or a profound dignity. At its least vehement the tone is pleasantly conversational as when Judge Clarke discusses one of Uddal's heretical pamphlets against bishops:

'That it is true they do not the good that they might do; but yet that does not excuse you: for it is plain in your book that you writ not against them only, but you writ against the State, when you say, that it is easier to live in England a Papist, an Anabaptist, of the Family of Love, and what not? Yea, you say, I could live so in a Bishop's house, it may be these twenty years and never be much molested for it. What is this but a plain slandering. And mark the words, for you say you could live so in England: And doth her Majesty's laws allow of Papists? This maketh evidently against you. . . .'<sup>2</sup> The whole excerpt has an extremely personal note and one can imagine the judge emphasizing his points with gesture and change of tone.

But when the speakers become angry or shaken, the tempo of the speech changes rapidly and the rhythms reflect their excitement. We can see John Story, at the end of a wearying examination, expostulating weakly and impotently repeating himself:

'Good people, I trust ye see how violently I am used, and how unjustly and contrary to all justice and equity they use me.'<sup>3</sup> Or Margaret Fell, becoming flustered when she is pressed to take an oath against her conscience:

'I never took on oath in my life. I have spent my days thus far and I never took an oath . . . I never laid my hand on the book to swear in all my life and I never was at this assize before. I was bred and born in this country and I have led my life in it and I was never at an assize before this.'<sup>4</sup>

Frequently the speakers lose their tempers and their speech faithfully reflects their indignation. Schismatics almost invariably arouse their judges to anger by their obstinacy, and the exclamations of the Archbishop of Canterbury in anger at Barrowe, who refused to take an oath, are very typical:

<sup>1</sup> Commission for Atheism at Cerne Abbas, 1594. Bodley Head Quartos, *Willobie his Avlsa*.

<sup>2</sup> *State Trials*, vol. I. Trial of Uddal (No. 68), Column 1286.

<sup>3</sup> Harleian. John Story, 1571, III, 104. <sup>4</sup> Harleian. Margaret Fell, VI, 285.

'Where is his keeper? You shall not prattle here, away with him, clap him up close, close, let no man come to him. I will make him tel another tale ere I have done with him.'<sup>1</sup> In a more dignified manner the Archbishop rises to a crescendo of indignation against the illegality of the Essex divorce. 'I doubt not in Almighty God, but to batter their nullity to dust.'<sup>2</sup> Or Cecil becomes incoherent with rage at an accusation against his integrity:

'But I would have you name the Counsellor you speak of: name him, name him if you dare, if you dare. I defy you, name him if you dare.'<sup>3</sup>

At the other extreme one sees emotion completely controlled, resulting in speeches of effective irony. There is an amusing example of this in Raleigh's exchange of repartee with the Public Attorney at his trial, when the latter cries 'I want words to express thy viperous treasons', to which Raleigh replies 'I think you want words indeed, for you have spoken one thing half a dozen times.'<sup>4</sup>

But Elizabethan speech reaches its highest levels on the scaffold or on some very solemn occasion, being capable of magnificent sonority or appalling pathos. Laud seems infinitely pathetic in his last speech:

'I thank you, I did not speak with any jealousy as if you would do so: but I spoke it only as a poor man going out of the world: it is not possible for me to keep to the words in my paper and a phrase may do me wrong. I did think there would have been an empty scaffold that I might have had room to die. I beseech you, let me have an end of this misery, for I have endured it long.'<sup>5</sup>

Essex at the end of his trial almost rivals the Old Testament with his eloquence:

'And here I protest before the Ever-living God, as he may have mercy on me, that my conscience is clear from any disloyal thought or harm to her Majesty, and my desire ever hath been to be free from bloodshed. But if in all my thoughts and purposes I did not ever desire the good estate of my Sovereign and country as of my own soul, I beseech the Lord then shew some mark upon me and my soul in this place for a just vengeance of my untruths to all the world. And God which knoweth the secrets of all hearts, knoweth that I never sought the crown of England, nor ever wished to be a higher degree than a subject.'<sup>6</sup>

These illustrations of Elizabethan speech, already too copious

<sup>1</sup> Henry Barrowe, 1586. Harleian, IV, 346.

<sup>2</sup> *State Trials*, II, No. 96, Divorce of Essex, 1613 (827).

<sup>3</sup> *State Trials*, I, Trial of Essex, No. 70, Column 1352.

<sup>4</sup> *State Trials*, II, Raleigh, 1603, No. 1, Column 26.

<sup>5</sup> Harleian, VIII, 603.

<sup>6</sup> *State Trials*, I, Trial of Essex, 1600, No. 70, Column 1354.

perhaps, are in no way exceptional and could be extended fifty fold with no decline in quality. They do accurately reflect spoken English in a wide variety of moods and indicate the very high level of Elizabethan expression.

## 4

There are certain general characteristics of Elizabethan spoken English which may be observed. The influence of the Bible, for example, is clearly apparent and we find many Quakers or Puritans, in particular, using Biblical language exactly in the manner of *Languebeau Snuff* or *Zeal-of-the-land Busy*. Wraynham, a Puritan, for instance, speaks in cadences which come directly from the Psalms:

'Had I thought his Majesty would not have heard my cause, I would have sat downe in silence and devoured my sorrow. I discerned the representation of a prison gaping for me, in which I must henceforth spend all the days of my life . . . In the making whereof I mustered all my miseries.'<sup>1</sup>

A little later we find abundance of the ranting Puritans who exclaim against the Beast and the Whore of Babylon. There is a delightful story of one of these men who railed at the wrong parson by mistake:

'Come down thou false Fothergill'. 'Who told thee,' says Mr Dalton, 'that my name is Fothergill?' 'The Spirit,' quoth the Quaker. 'That Spirit of thine is a lying Spirit,' says the other, 'for it is well known that I am not Fothergill but Peed Dalton of Shap.'<sup>2</sup>

There were occasions, also, when the Elizabethan could not resist the use of Latin in speech. Bacon, whether in set oration or extempore, invariably uses a Latin tag, and so famous was his habit that often no other part of his speech is recorded. 'Sir Francis Bacon spoke to the same effect also and in the end concluded thus "Nescio quid peccate portet haec purgatio"'. We are reminded of Cicero in *Julius Caesar* whose speech in Greek so puzzled Casca. At times, the habit of quoting leads to pedantry, and a short speech by Laud creates a very vivid impression of a wordy and pedantic speaker. 'Nor how patiently some great men, very great indeed, have been animo civili (that's Suetonius' word) locratum existimationem, the tearing and rending of their credit and reputation with a gentle, nay a generous mind.'<sup>3</sup> This is the very type of Justice Overdo's speech in *Bartholomew Fair*, and there is no doubt that Ben Jonson is here satirizing a real type of Elizabethan. Puns, too, are not uncommon, even in the middle of serious speeches. Bastwick

<sup>1</sup> *State Trials*, II, No. 113, Wraynham, 1618, Column 1069.

<sup>2</sup> *Depositions from Yorke Castle*. (Surtees Soc.) (Preface, XXIII).

<sup>3</sup> *State Trials*, III, Bastwick, Column 726, No. 145.

during his trial uses the phrase 'to curtalize a Roman's ears like a cur', and the Attorney General makes great play on the name of a papist, Carrier; 'Will you anything to Rome? There is a Carrier packing thither shortly.' Even the Bishop of London cannot resist punning on the name of a prisoner called Able.

The evidence concerning the extent of metaphor in common speech is not so trustworthy, since imagery is the quality of a speech most likely to be forgotten or omitted by a reporter. Whatever the reason, the first impression one gains from the accounts is that spoken English was not heavily metaphorical like dramatic language, and that the long extended metaphor, so common in poetry, was comparatively rare. Where such allegories do occur in unprepared speeches, they usually ring the changes on old rhetorical or traditional favourites. Nicholas Bacon illustrates a point 'by a similitude that is old and common but neither unapt or untrue that is like as unto the head of a natural body pertaineth the appointment, and, as it were, the marshalling of every member of the same body . . . so to the head of every body Politick . . .'<sup>1</sup> And an anonymous speaker in the debate on monopolies develops the same image in terms which bring Coriolanus to mind:

'There be three persons, Her Majesty, the Patentee and the subject. Her Majesty the Head, the Patentee the Hand and the subject the Foot. Now here is our case; the Head gives Power to the Hand; the Hand oppresseth the Foot; the Foot riseth against the Head.'<sup>2</sup>

The Doctor-Physic and Plaister-Sore images occur fairly often, and so too the long and tedious simile of the painter who painted a picture of the sea with a large tree in the middle of it, which was used to illustrate any form of indecorum. Such elaborate images as these clearly do not arise spontaneously out of personal observation but are derived from the rhetorical commonplace book, as can be seen from the amusing inaccuracy with which they are occasionally used. Story, the Jesuit, for example, in his death speech, drops into the complete sermon vein and elaborates his point by means of a familiar ship image:

'Example: a ship that is tossed on the floods . . . So likewise I, being in the ship of Christ once fell out of the same ship and was in present peryll and great danger; but then I, following the example of a good mariner, tooke the cock-boat . . . and at last (being in the boat) I espied three oars, that is to wit, contricion, confession and absolution, and I held all these fast and ever since I have continued in the ship of Christ.'<sup>3</sup> If Story had thought at all clearly about the matter he might have realized the difficulty of rowing with three oars

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Lords*, 1558-59, Simonds D'Ewes.

<sup>2</sup> HEYWOOD TOWNSEND, op. cit., p. 234.

<sup>3</sup> Harleian, III, 107. Story, 1571.

at once, and this is an important point, for it underlines clearly the fact that the long allegory was a deliberate exercise of rhetoric rather than a spontaneous feature of the language.

Shorter images are more common, and these, from the amount of repetition, would appear to come from a general well known stock. For example, 'The rebels in Ireland which he said were like a snake cut in pieces which did crawl and creep to joyn themselves together again';<sup>1</sup> or 'Laws which he said were like thornes that did prick but yield no fruit';<sup>2</sup> or 'As for the act itself, I think it to be a mere cobweb, to catch poor flies in.'<sup>3</sup>

But by far the commonest type of image is that which occurs in the proverb, and Elizabethan speech seems to have been particularly rich in this type of expression. Examples are easy to find:

'It is easie to make of a mole hill a mountain.'

'Every man can tame a shrew but he that hath her.'

'There is a gull to sweeten the Bill withall, it is only to make fools fond.'

'Sell the great Bell to buy the little Bell a clapper.'

'Leap not over the stile before you come to it.'

The amusing debate in 1601 on the question of cash payments or credit provoked a torrent of racy colloquialisms of this kind:

'I think this law is a good law. Even Reckoning makes long friends: As far goes the Penny as the Penny's master . . . Pay the Reckoning over night and you shall not be troubled in the morning. If ready money be mensura Publica, let every man cut his coat according to his cloth. When his old suit is in the wain, let him stay till that his money bring a new suit in the increase. . . .'<sup>4</sup>

On rare occasions, the striking and possibly original image does appear. 'Whether the Privileges in former times have daunced a Pavan to and fro and according to the time, have been altered';<sup>5</sup> or 'You will make so great a window out of the law that we shall put the law out of window';<sup>6</sup> or 'The gentleman that last spake, it seems, thinketh out of his grief of mind in being galled by some tongue-metal';<sup>7</sup> or 'He whose voice may be drawn either forwards or backwards by the sleeves, like a dog in a string.'<sup>8</sup> But as a whole, the metaphor in these accounts is mainly traditional and derived from a generally known stock.

The debate on cash or credit already referred to provides one striking exception, however, when Mr Sargeant Harris produced a dazzling succession of images:

'These Merchants' Books are like Aaron's rod, ever budding, and

<sup>1</sup> HEYWOOD TOWNSHEND, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 322.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 197.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 306.

like Basingstoke reckonings, over night five shillings and sixpence, if you pay it not it is grown in the morning to a Just Noble. This debt is a sleeping debt, it will lull young gentlemen into Merchants' Books with the golden Hooks of being trusted by the merchant and his expectancy after his father's death.<sup>1</sup>

I would suggest that in this case the debate was an unusually flippant one and that the speech is therefore an instance of deliberate wit, a type of expression rare in the sober atmosphere of Commons or the Star chamber. The contemporary manuals of conversation indicate that witty speech was conceived as something distinct from the speech of ordinary occasions and closely related to Rhetoric.<sup>2</sup> *Palladis Tamia*, for example, states in its preface that 'all the source of wit . . . may flowe within three channels and be contrived into three heads, into a sentence, a similitude and an example', and Castiglione declares specifically that metaphor must be part of the gentleman's stock-in-trade. 'Sometime I would have him take certain wordes in an other significacion than that is proper to them, and wresting them to his purpose, graffe them like a graffe of a tree in a more luckye stocke . . .' Similes in particular seem to have been connected with wit, if the large number of such tropes included in the conversation books is anything to go by.<sup>3</sup> It is significant that the professedly witty men in Elizabethan drama specialize in the art of simile; Prince Hal has the 'most unsavoury similes' and Benedick 'breaks a comparison or two' on Beatrice; Jaques moralizes the spectacle of the dying deer into 'a thousand similes', while Thersites or Carlo Buffone speak little else.

But such wit was not for everyday use. Braithwaite warns his gentlemen 'never to tie yourselves so strictly to eloquence or ornament as by the outward trimming to forget the benefit of speech and so fall into expressions impertinent. This were to preferre the rind before the pith' and Puttenham in his chapter on 'How our writing and speaches ought to be figurative' bans ornaments from ordinary speech 'because they pass the ordinary limits of common utterance . . .' The general feeling was that Figures were good in their proper place but bad out of it. 'Everything must have his time and place . . . Dauncing is mete for feastes and weddings; it is not to use in the street.' When, indeed, the language of rhetoric flowed over too far into ordinary intercourse, it became the 'complement' which drew the just censure of Shakespeare and every Elizabethan of taste. In an age of rapidly changing social classes, everyone desired to speak like a gentleman, and the complement was at bottom the uneducated man's conception of courtly wit. It consisted in the

<sup>1</sup> HENWOOD TOWNSHEND, p. 283.

<sup>2</sup> See W. G. CRANE: *Wit and Rhetoric in the Renaissance*.

<sup>3</sup> e.g. *Belvedere or the Garden of the Muses*.

indiscriminate use of rhetoric since that, like the Oxford accent in later years, was considered the hall-mark of gentility. The *Academy of Complements*<sup>1</sup> for instance, promises to cure the reader of dumbness and to enable him to converse to the admiration of all 'especially in the court where neatness and curiosities of all sorts and principally of speech is to a syllable exactly studied'. The examples which it gives, 'set thee downe in a forme which upon an occasion offered thou may'st imitate or with a little alteration make use of . . . ' provide some extraordinary reading.

'Be not so inconstant in your affection lest in the conclusion you prove like the marigold to open at the sunshine of prosperity and to shut at the least appearance of the clouds of adversity,' remarks the lady to the over-ambitious lover, to which he replies 'Madam you are the saint to whose shrine I daily offer up my scalding sighs. For your Beauty mistresse, I may name you Venus, for your comeliness, Pallas, for your port and honour, Juno . . . 'Tis you alone, pure one, that have made a breach into the bullwork of my breast.' It is interesting to see how Euphuism has descended the social scale. Once again the drama is founded on fact. Osric, Monsieur D'Olive, Balurdo or Puntarvolo courting his mistress in the 'perfection of complement' are all echoes of reality.

The main conclusion which I wish to draw from this survey is that the language of Elizabethan speech was not the language of Elizabethan literature. Spoken English, apart from deliberate sallies of wit, was unrheterical and less colourful than the written prose of the period, but it possessed instead a lucidity and flexibility, a power of precise definition and forceful argument which Professor L. C. Knights has found lacking in the written word.<sup>2</sup> Spratt in his search of a style for scientific expression could have found what he sought in everyday conversation. The history of seventeenth-century prose style shows the replacement of a rhetorical by a naturalistic technique and the achievement of modern prose by the end of the century represents the fusion of the written and the spoken word.

<sup>1</sup> *The Academy of Complements wherein Ladyes, Gentlewomen and Schollars and strangers may accommodate their courtly practice with the most curious ceremonies, complementall, Amorous, High expressions and forms of speaking and writing*, by T. B. 1639. See also *Cupid's School . . . of new witty and Amorous Complements*, 1632. Quoted by L. B. Wright, *Middle Class Culture*, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> L. C. KNIGHTS: *Drama and Society in the Age of Johnson*. Appendix.

MR. CHURCHILL'S *THE SECOND WORLD WAR*

F. H. HINSLEY

## 1

ONLY one serious criticism has been levelled against Mr Churchill's volumes on the Second World War, of which three have now been published; and this is expressed in the complaint of a recent commentator that 'the assumption of infallibility... casts a passing cloud upon a great historical narrative'.<sup>1</sup>

In a general way, this criticism itself has arisen from an assumption on the part of the critics that Mr Churchill is out to write a considered history of the Second World War. But he anticipated this assumption and took the precaution of issuing a disclaimer in the preface to the first volume, *The Gathering Storm*. Speaking of the use he has made of his contemporary minutes and directives, on which he has drawn so heavily, he has written there that 'I do not claim it as history, for that belongs to a future generation. But I claim with confidence that it is a contribution to history which will be of service to the future.' He has repeated and expanded this warning in the preface to the third volume, *The Grand Alliance*, in which it is announced that 'this volume, like the others, claims only to be a contribution to the history of the Second World War. The tale is told from the standpoint of the British Prime Minister. . . .'

In the same place he has provided an answer to the most frequent — and most obvious — particular charge on which the general criticism has been based, to the charge that, though quoting his own minutes and memoranda at length, he has rarely printed the papers which answered — and, no doubt, sometimes preceded — his own. 'The main thread,' he explains, 'is again the series of my directives . . . they constitute a more authentic record of . . . what happened, and how it seemed at the time, than any account which I could write now that the course of events is known. Space would not allow, nor indeed in many cases have I the right, to print the replies . . . I have therefore been careful to avoid, as far as I can, throwing blame on individuals. . . .'

It must be admitted that Mr Churchill did something to invite the general confusion by giving the title *The Second World War* to the work as a whole. Where the particular complaint is concerned, his more critical readers will surely claim that the last-quoted statement has only made matters worse; for it contains the implication that, even if he printed them, the papers of other people would

<sup>1</sup> W. E. WILLIAMS in the *Observer* for September 17th, 1950.

only show that Mr Churchill was right and the other people wrong. He has, moreover, somewhat weakened his defence in this matter by quoting noticeably more of other people's papers in Volume III than he did in the two earlier volumes. For these reasons, and if only because people do not always read prefaces, he cannot hope to erase the impression that has already formed in some minds. But, when all is said, he seems to have a good case.

He has given due warning of the limitations of his work. He has provided, to the chief particular complaint, an answer which, in the light of that warning, must be regarded as adequate, if it was necessary at all. And if the volumes are to be criticized, for the assumption of infallibility or on any other ground, they must be criticized on their own terms, for what they profess to be and to do, and with reference to whatever framework of rules the author has made clear or laid down within his proposed limits.

## 2

It so happens that Mr Churchill, within his announced limits, has laid down two rules, and has advised us that he is following them. One concerns his use of enemy information, of which so much was captured at the end of the war; the other his assessment of British action and policy during the war.

With regard to enemy information, he explains his intentions in the preface to the first volume. 'Every possible care,' he writes, 'has been taken to verify the facts; but much is constantly coming to light from the disclosure of captured documents . . . which may present a new aspect to the conclusions which I have drawn.' The only implication to be drawn from this statement is that his aim has been to incorporate all available enemy information that is relevant.

His other rule is listed in the same preface. 'I have adhered to my rule of never criticizing any measure of war or policy after the event unless I had before expressed publicly or formally my opinion or warning about it. Indeed, in the afterlight, I have softened many of the severities of contemporary controversy. . . .'

Now Mr Churchill's decision to adopt these rules has itself done a great deal to increase the impression of assumed infallibility made on the minds of some critics by the more obvious considerations mentioned above. Though the critics have not clearly diagnosed their feelings, many must have felt it strange that he has the space to quote the enemy at such length throughout these volumes, but not the space to quote his colleagues. Some must have wondered whether, in telling the tale from the point of view of the British Prime Minister, it was necessary to dwell so much on the points of view of Hitler and Mussolini. As for the second rule, the fact that it does not require him to criticize measures of which he approved, the fact that

he himself initiated so many of the measures, and the fact that he is not the sort of man who has frequent doubts about the wisdom of courses on which he has decided — all these things make it easy, to say the least, to jump to the conclusion that Mr Churchill is out to prove that he was always right.

But, if we look more closely at these rules, we shall find that, as defined, they are quite consistent with the announced intentions and limitations of the work, and that, though they have contributed to the impression of assumed infallibility, in ways outlined above, they do not justify that impression. In telling his story from the point of view of the British Prime Minister, Mr Churchill is, on the one hand, quite free to omit all but his own side and the end-result of interchanges with his colleagues, and, on the other, quite bound to include available enemy information. For he was in charge of his colleagues and at war with the enemy; and the tale he has to tell is the tale of his conduct of the war. In giving us his account of this, as a contribution to the history of the war, and not as a considered history, he is free to give it in the form of an explanation and not in the form of a critical analysis of that conduct, and it is this that makes his second rule consistent and acceptable. To establish Mr Churchill's infallibility need not have been its aim, and need not be its consequence.

If, then, we accept — as we have been advised to do — that what we are getting in these volumes is Mr Churchill's account of his conduct of the War, and Mr Churchill's explanation of that conduct, we are no more justified in boggling at these rules than we are in criticizing the volumes for something other than what they profess to be. We may regret that he has not chosen to write a different work from that incomparable experience with that incomparable pen. We may wish that he had worked to different rules. We may feel that the aim and limitations of what we have been given could have been more exactly announced and more frequently referred to in the course of the volumes. But, when we criticize what we have been given, we must do so, not only as what it professes to be, but also with an acceptance of the fact that the rules adopted by the author are consistent with his aim and beyond complaint.

## 3

The ground having been thus surveyed and cleared, the obvious starting-point for relevant criticism is to see what Mr Churchill has done with his own rules. Has he been faithful to them? Has he abused them? And, if he has ever deserted them, what were his motives?

This is no easy task. In the matter of enemy information, since he could not quote it all, Mr Churchill had the problem of selecting

what he thinks is relevant; and the critic must have as close a knowledge as Mr Churchill of the whole field of that information if he is to challenge Mr Churchill's judgment here.<sup>1</sup> Where the other rule is concerned, there is the danger that, if he attempts to challenge Mr Churchill's explanation of his policy decisions, he will speak with wisdom after the event; and he will certainly speak with far less experience than Mr Churchill can command.

Yet the attempt must be made; for this is the correct critical approach; and the result, when this method is pursued, is the discovery that Mr Churchill is not quite so faithful to the two rules which he has himself laid down as he might at first sight seem to be.

## 4

Some digression is necessary on the enemy material, and particularly on the evidence it provides about Hitler's strategy, if this approach is to be followed by the reader, and it will be more convenient to make that digression here, before we properly embark.

The period from July to December 1940, was the crucial period of the whole war; and for Hitler it was a period of unrelieved gloom. He was frustrated when Great Britain refused to surrender after the defeat of France. He was frustrated because she still refused to surrender when, to all her other difficulties, was added the threat of a German invasion. Yet another disappointment was the knowledge that an invasion, which he had only mounted in order to launch it as the *coup de grace*, could not even be considered in these other circumstances. He was then frustrated again; for, casting about, as he always was, for the earliest possible defeat of this country, he devised schemes for the conquest of the Mediterranean, only to be forced to abandon them in their turn in the next three months.

The first blow to these Mediterranean plans came with the Italian attack on Greece in October 1940. Hitler had had no definite warning of this move. He was alarmed by the British exploitation of it, and particularly by the occupation of Crete, which threatened, he thought, the Roumanian oil. He therefore cancelled, early in November 1940, the project of a drive to Suez — by reinforcing the Italians in North Africa and by advancing through Turkey — and ordered, instead, the defensive occupation of Greece.

While the Middle East and the Eastern Basin were thus abandoned, his plans in the Western Mediterranean — particularly for the seizure of Gibraltar — and his negotiations for Spanish collaboration in this enterprise, were unaffected until the next blow fell. And it fell — so easily may little things have large and incalculable effects —

<sup>1</sup> By way of putting my cards on the table, and because I cannot give chapter and verse, in a short article, for much of what follows, I must refer the reader to my forthcoming book entitled *Hitler's Strategy*.

as a result of the first British Western Desert offensive, which opened on December 6th. For, once again, Hitler exaggerated the strength and potential of the British thrust. He had wild and immediate visions of the defeat of Italy, of the desertion of Vichy, of an early British advance into the Balkans through Greece. Franco had similar visions and was looking for an excuse to avoid having German troops in Spain. Thus, having already abandoned the Middle East and the Eastern Basin, Hitler was forced to turn his back on the Western Mediterranean as well. He failed in a last minute attempt to secure Spanish collaboration against Gibraltar. Instead, he mounted an emergency operation against the possible desertion of Vichy; he was forced, in spite of his earlier decision, to come to Italy's support in North Africa with aircraft and special troops; and, because his fear for the Balkans had been further increased by the British thrust, he enlarged the scale of the projected attack on Greece from ten to twenty-four divisions. Finally, on December 12th, 1940, in the same excess of alarm, he decided 'to crush Soviet Russia in a rapid campaign'.

This last decision, unlike the others, was only partly the result of the Western Desert offensive. He had long contemplated an attack on Russia; he had been thinking of it seriously since the previous July, and even more seriously since September. But it is clear that it was the December offensive which finally destroyed his hesitation. It is clear that the motives from which he finally made the decision were wholly due to the series of events which ended with that offensive, and to their effect on his state of mind. He could no longer think of an unimpeded attack on Russia, with Great Britain defeated, as he had in the first instance. He was no longer greatly impressed by the fear that, unless he attacked Russia, Russia would attack him, as he had been while mounting the invasion of England. His new object in making the decision was twofold: he thought that the rapid defeat of Russia was the only way of bringing Great Britain to a settlement; and he also thought that it was the only available means of keeping the United States out of the War.

And, because these objects had become so dear to him, he not only decided to attack in the East; he decided to do so to the complete exclusion of all other offensive operations. He would help the Italians to hold a defensive line in Cyrenaica, because he had no alternative. He would proceed with the attack on Greece, but only for defensive reasons and because it formed an essential part of his larger plan. He would seize Crete in order to defend Greece. But all other projects — a return to the Gibraltar plan, the capture of Malta, an advance to the Middle East via Turkey, Iraq or North Africa — were ruled out, though they were often discussed, until Russia had been defeated.

## 5

We may now return to Mr Churchill's rules, and we shall begin by analysing his handling of the first.

This first rule, as we have already seen, has faced him with the problem of deciding what available enemy information was relevant. It has also created for him the difficulty of preserving a true proportion between enemy material, which was only obtained after the War, and his own contemporary archives. And when these two difficulties are considered, it will be seen that the temptation must have been immense to select from the former only what accorded with the latter, instead of all that was relevant to the tale.

It is necessary, therefore, to say at once that, as far as can be judged from an independent study of the enemy material, Mr Churchill has usually resisted this temptation. In the two volumes covering the whole of 1940 and 1941<sup>1</sup> his selection from the enemy archives is usually admirably fair, proportioned and correct. It may be added that his judgment at the time was usually so acute, and his assessments so far-sighted, that the gap between his contemporary archives and the enemy material is less than might be expected, and that his temptation was correspondingly reduced.

But the fact remains that he has made a few mistakes, one of interpretation, the others of omission, which throw some light on his discharge of his self-appointed task. The error of interpretation is contained in the statement he makes from time to time<sup>2</sup> to the effect that there is no doubt that, by the end of September 1940, Hitler had made up his mind to attack Russia. The errors of omission lie in that fact that, for all his detailed account of the German invasion of Greece, Mr Churchill nowhere makes it clear that Hitler had already decided on that operation in November 1940, or that he was never, thereafter, swayed from that purpose, or that, when following up that invasion by the decision to take Crete, he was still governed by an entirely defensive attitude towards the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

It is impossible to make much of the first mistake — that of interpretation. The mistaken assumption that Hitler had made up his mind to attack Russia as early as September 1940, does have the effect of underlining Mr Churchill's wisdom and accuracy in this direction at the time. At quite an early date he had put his trust in the fundamental antagonism of Russia and Germany.<sup>3</sup> In June 1940, he calculated that Hitler would recoil eastwards if he failed in the Battle of Britain, and that he might even do so without making

<sup>1</sup> I am not here concerned with Volume I (*The Gathering Storm*), which deals with the period before Mr Churchill became Prime Minister.

<sup>2</sup> *Their Finest Hour*, pp. 119 and 510.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 118.

an invasion attempt.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, we can be certain that Mr Churchill would not have made it if he could have helped it. For one who was so discontented with a defensive war<sup>2</sup>, for one who pressed and prepared so consistently for action in North Africa,<sup>3</sup> it could only be gratifying to discover how effective the action was, when at last it came, in sealing Hitler's decision to turn on Russia. This mistake, moreover, was easily made. Others have made it, as well as Mr Churchill; and they have made it with less excuse than he, for whom the close analysis of enemy documents, which is necessary if the mistake is to be avoided, was not the sole concern. For these reasons, it would be ridiculous to claim that Mr Churchill's scrutiny of the enemy records on this point was affected by his anxiety to emphasize his anticipation of Hitler's attack on Russia.

When, however, we turn to the other mistakes we shall find that they, being mistakes of omission, were much more difficult to commit and are, consequently, more easily explained; and we shall find that the explanation throws some light on Mr Churchill's approach and temperament as the author of these volumes. For there can be little doubt, where they are concerned, that his oversight with the enemy material covering the period at the end of 1940 has been due to his anxiety to justify his strategy in the Balkans at the beginning of 1941.

## 6

Before this charge can be taken further, we must undertake the analysis of Mr Churchill's handling of his second rule, for it is by that rule that he has said he will be governed in his treatment of his own and other British measures of war.

The second rule — the 'rule of never criticizing any measure of war or policy after the event unless I had before expressed publicly or formally my opinion or warning about it' — was framed in the first place out of respect for others. We have seen that it could be interpreted to mean that he does not intend to criticize, but only to explain, measures of which he himself approved, and that these would be likely to include all the measures which he himself initiated; and we have claimed that this interpretation is quite consistent with the professed aim and scope of Mr Churchill's volumes. There is a distinction, however, between sticking to explanation and eschewing criticism, on the one hand, and setting about the defence *à outrance* of a measure, on the other. Mr Churchill's second rule can legitimately be interpreted to cover the first of these things; it can only be interpreted to cover the other at the expense of being abused.

Now, as with the first, so with the second rule, Mr Churchill has rarely abused it in the volumes that have so far appeared. In the

<sup>1</sup> *Their Finest Hour*, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 376-9, 391-3, 400.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 103, 201, 213, 405.

period they cover, events were usually either beyond his control or were influenced by him in a wise and right direction, so that he can usually confine himself to the legitimate function of explaining his conduct, just as he can usually move freely and uninhibitedly through the enemy archives, without embarrassment or difficulty. He had no control over the Battle of France, his first problem as Prime Minister; and was wise to reject the French demands for air reinforcements which would have denuded the defences of Great Britain. Dunkirk speaks for itself, needs no defence; and it was, moreover, the result of executive action on the part of others, and not of a policy decision on Mr Churchill's level. In the attack on Oran, when faced with the invasion danger, and throughout the Battle of Britain, he came into his own, and can hardly be said to have put a foot wrong. Neither on these subjects nor on the more positive and more brilliant decision to reinforce the Middle East at this time can he ever have felt the slightest need or temptation to do more than describe his magnificent contribution. Even in his chapter on the abortive attack on Dakar, the first (if a minor) setback for which he shares some of the responsibility, he has been able to rise above this need, and give us an account which is admirable in its objectivity.<sup>1</sup> But this objectivity, this adherence to a correct and acceptable application of his second rule, breaks down when Mr Churchill approaches the first and only serious issue of a controversial nature with which the present volumes deal. It breaks down, as does his handling of the enemy material, when he begins the account of his Balkan and Middle East strategy in 1941.

His objective in this area was to rally Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey against Hitler's drive to the Balkans, which was obviously intended. His central decision was to go to the aid of Greece. His motives at the time were the wish to deter the Germans from making the advance at all, the need to forestall a further German advance to Palestine, Iraq, Egypt and Persia, and the hope that opposition to the Axis in this area would have what he calls 'a favourable effect' on the attitude of Russia.<sup>2</sup>

In view of what has since been learned of Hitler's strategy, we can now say that this plan was doomed to failure, and that the fears and hopes which underlay it were equally unfounded. Hitler had already decided to take Greece, and had set twenty-four divisions to the task. There was no hope of deterring him by direct action; on the contrary, he was chiefly impelled by the fear of British intervention in the Balkans. The more this became evident, the more desperate and determined he would become — though it is only fair, in reply to some critics, to add that the chief damage in this respect had already been done by the Western Desert offensive, and that

<sup>1</sup> *Their Finest Hour*, chap. XXIV.

<sup>2</sup> *The Grand Alliance*, pp. 26-7, 33, 84.

Mr Churchill's activities in 1941, if they could not deter, were certainly not needed to encourage, Hitler's action against Greece. There was no need to forestall a German advance into the Middle East, for Hitler had already abandoned this aim in favour of the attack on Russia. As for the possibility of influencing Russia's attitude, the contemporary evidence which Mr Churchill himself gives in his third volume is enough to show that it did not exist. Despite her many misgivings, the more forceful Hitler became in his drive to the Balkans, the more ostrich-like Russia became, the more determined to keep the peace patched up.

It must be emphasized that none of this evidence can be used to show that Mr Churchill's strategy was wrong. He did not know, and could not have known, Hitler's intentions in advance. In this situation the danger to the Middle East could not have been ignored; for Hitler, in his senses, would have made that a prime objective at this time. The hopes Mr Churchill experienced were, like his fears, bound to be present. The difficulties in the way of his plan were enormous and obvious; but who has shown more often than Mr Churchill that it does not always pay to be deterred? And, if, in his book, Mr Churchill had been content to take this line, explaining his policy against this background, emphasizing — as, in fact, he did at the time<sup>1</sup> — the uncertainties, the difficulties and the apparent size of the stakes, then it would have been as difficult to object to his subsequent handling of the subject as it is to criticize him for acting as he did at the time.

But he has chosen to take a different course. He has chosen, not merely to explain his Greek decision, but to undertake its out-and-out defence. He has chosen to defend it, not merely by emphasizing the difficulties and uncertainties which obtained at the time, but with the aid of all the subsequent enemy evidence which suits his purpose, and at the expense of overlooking the enemy evidence that does not. He has chosen, while admitting that it failed, to use this evidence to claim that it nevertheless had important results which still justify its adoption. And, in taking this course, he has laid himself open to a whole chain of legitimate criticism.

## 7

The starting-point of this criticism is the charge already laid. For, if the Greek decision is to be defended with the aid of subsequent enemy information, that information must be presented, if not in all its detail, at least in correct proportion; but Mr Churchill has failed in this respect. He has overlooked the evidence that Hitler's decision to occupy Greece was taken in the previous November; that his state of mind was such that British action in the Balkans could

<sup>1</sup> *The Grand Alliance*, pp. 63, 65, 90.

only strengthen his determination to put the decision into effect; and that he soon afterwards abandoned all idea of an offensive in the Middle East. It is true that this information was not available at the time; it has already been argued that, for that reason, it cannot be used when criticizing Mr Churchill's decision. But Mr Churchill, who sometimes points out that it is easy to be wise after the event,<sup>1</sup> cannot expect to have these omissions excused on this ground in this case. For, in his defence of his policy, he has refrained from wisdom after the event with the above enemy material while being wise after the event with the rest. And, apart from the difficulty of overlooking the omissions to which we have referred, it is this fact which suggests that he can only have overlooked them out of anxiety to defend his policy.

When, instead of overlooking the enemy evidence, he has used it for his purpose, he has used it to argue that, if the Greek operation failed, it still had useful results. In particular, he claims<sup>2</sup> that, but for the decision to try to defend Greece, Hitler might have settled with Russia and taken the Middle East, or might more probably have attacked Russia at any earlier date or in greater strength. But the first of these suggestions is ruled out by the enemy evidence that Mr Churchill has overlooked, while the second, though based on the evidence of the enemy archives to the effect that the attack on Russia was delayed by the Yugoslav revolt, is out of place for two reasons.

It is out of place, in the first instance, because, pursuing this evidence, he asks whether his Greek decision 'did not produce consequences first upon Russia and next upon her fortunes?'.<sup>3</sup> By this he means that it created for Hitler the risk of falling between two stools, of impairing his supreme undertaking for the sake of a Balkan preliminary.<sup>4</sup> But, though he admits that he did not know at the time that Hitler had already determined to invade Russia, the effect of urging that subsequent knowledge is still to put the Greek strategy in a better light — 'at least we builded better than we knew'<sup>5</sup> — at a time when the subsequent knowledge that would put it in a worse light is suppressed. And this is an illegitimate effect.

Its illegitimacy is independent of the accuracy or otherwise of the conclusions drawn by Mr Churchill from the evidence. His methods would still be wrong if his deductions were right. And this opens up the second line of criticism. Not all would agree, on all the evidence, that Hitler's attack on Russia was seriously affected by the British decision to move into Greece. In the same way, to move on to the one concrete result which he claims for that decision,<sup>6</sup> and which is central to Mr Churchill's defence of his policy, it is by

<sup>1</sup> *The Grand Alliance*, pp. 26-7, 207.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 148.

no means certain that the Yugoslav revolt was a result of the policy he adopted. It must be admitted that these are controversial issues; but the very fact that his deductions are not so immune from criticism as he implies must be counted as another weakness in Mr Churchill's case.

And this leads on to yet another. He points out<sup>1</sup> that the alternative strategy, by which it would have been decided 'to mind our own business and make a success of our campaign in North East Africa . . . has found its adherents in the books of various officers occupying subordinate positions'. He goes on to complain, not only that it is easy to be wise after the event, but that these critics 'had not the knowledge to consider sufficiently what the results of this opposite policy might have been'. But, since Mr Churchill uses subsequent enemy evidence to establish some justification and results for the policy that was adopted, we are free to use the same evidence in the interests of the alternative; and this process leaves no doubt whatever, in the afterlight, about the greater merit of that other plan. For the alternative to the Greek campaign was not merely success in North East Africa but, as Mr Churchill himself makes clear, a successful drive to Tripoli; and the evidence we now possess about Hitler's conduct of the War does more than establish that there was no hope of preventing his drive to Greece, no need to forestall a further drive into the Middle East, and little possibility of influencing the Russian situation by action in the Balkans. It leaves us with no doubt that the advance to Tripoli, resting on a reserve retained in Egypt, would have created greater problems for Hitler than the defensive campaign in Greece. It would have been the better move.

It is, of course, one thing to say this now and quite another to claim that it could have been seen at the time. Some would say that, even then, it should have been obvious that the Greek plan, the deliberate choice of frontal opposition to the Germans on the continent, when an alternative course of action was available, was strategically unsound. It certainly ignored the lesson, which Mr Churchill himself had done so much to drive home, that nothing is so effective, in wars between Great Britain and the continent, as the enormous leverage effect that can be exerted by initiative on the perimeter which Great Britain can command. But to take this line is to be in danger of attacking Mr Churchill's defence, as he has constructed it, in the light of partial enemy information and with the aid of speculation; and it will be safer to end this criticism — which is criticism of his book and not of his Greek strategy — on a different note.

For the truth is that Mr Churchill was aware at the time, in the period between the original conception of the strategy and its

<sup>1</sup> *The Grand Alliance*, pp. 26-7.

execution, of the strategic weakness of the original conception, but allowed that feeling to be outweighed by other considerations. His book shows quite clearly, not only that he retained freedom of action about the eventual decision almost until the end, but that he always had doubts and hesitations about the wisdom of the decision. On February 20th, 1941, for example, he told the Middle East delegation not to consider themselves 'obligated to a Greek enterprise if in your hearts you feel it will only be another Norwegian fiasco'.<sup>1</sup> He clearly saw the force of Mr Eden's telegram of the following day to the effect that 'it is, of course, a gamble to send forces to the mainland of Europe to fight Germans at this time'.<sup>2</sup> Later, his hesitations grew so grave that on March 6th, recognizing that the 'loss of Greece and the Balkans is by no means a major catastrophe for us', he seriously considered the abandonment of the entire undertaking. And 'I am sure,' he now adds, accepting full responsibility for what was decided, 'I could have stopped it all if I had been convinced. It is so much easier to stop than to do'.<sup>3</sup>

Thus we are faced with the curious fact that he defends his Greek strategy much more fiercely now, in his book, than he ever did at the time. And, while one could never charge him with attempting to evade responsibility for the policy, and would have to be ignorant of the circumstances and lacking in proportion to demand that he should have changed his mind, one must regret, not only that he has abused his own rule by undertaking the out-and-out defence of his policy, but that he has attempted to apply the rule at all in this case. For the rule is that of 'never criticizing any measure of war or policy after the event, unless I had before expressed publicly or formally my opinion about it'; and it need hardly have been applied to an undertaking about which he so often expressed his doubts and hesitations in advance.

These criticisms may seem to justify the complaint that the chief weakness of Mr Churchill's volumes is 'the assumption of infallibility', but to show that the complaint has so far been made on the wrong grounds. They also show, however, that, if he now seems to have been infallible, it is largely because he was so often right at the time. And, where his Greek strategy is concerned, although it must be counted as the one major exception in this respect, if only because the issue is highly controversial, it is permissible to suggest that his mistakes as an author may not be due to the sordid and un-Churchillian urge to prove that he was right. They could be due to those belligerent and combative elements in his temperament which, even if they also explain his original conception of the Greek plan itself, stood us in such good stead in the dark days of the war.

<sup>1</sup> *The Grand Alliance*, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 90.

## BERKELEY'S STYLE IN *SIRIS*

DONALD A. DAVIE

BERKELEY in *Siris* seeks a cure for all ills; not only physical, but psychological, and in the last analysis spiritual ills. The most startling feature of his book is implicit in its curious form. It is a 'chain' of reflections. And the reflections begin in the world of physic, and end in metaphysic. The form implies that the distinction between the physical and the metaphysical is artificial. This realization may be compared with the conviction, in modern medicine, that mind and body are intimate, so that a psychological malady may produce physical symptoms. And thus Berkeley's panacea on the medical level, tar-water, is not really distinguishable from the root-element on the chemical level (where Berkeley feels towards the notion of oxygen), nor from the invariable ground of existence on the metaphysical level (the aethereal fire). The aethereal fire is, as it were, the root-element in its field; and faith in the fire, as such, is a sort of panacea for spiritual unrest, as tar-water for physical unease.

Berkeley, like Dr. Johnson, deals often in the no-man's-land between mind and body, where wander the nervous languors of *angst* and hypochondria. And while Johnson resolutely denied the possibility of any panacea (his Christian faith was far too troubled to qualify as that, and throughout *Rasselas*, for instance, he insists that every seeming panacea is illusion), yet Johnson and Berkeley see the human predicament (the ills for which the panacea is needed), in strikingly similar terms. For both of them were a prey to the form of hypochondriac melancholia which attacked so many of the best minds of the eighteenth century. It may be that one source of this melancholia was the impossibility, for the sensitive mind, of finding satisfaction in Shaftesbury's and Hume's world of good-sense and good-nature, to which ideal they clung nevertheless, in their conscious minds, as the only cement of stability and order. But the unrest could be seen with equal justice as a physical or, better, a nervous disorder. It is thus seen by Berkeley:

The soul of man was supposed by many ancient sages to be thrust into the human body as into a prison, for punishment of past offences. But the worst prison is the body of an indolent epicure, whose blood is inflamed by fermented liquors and high sauces, or rendered putrid, sharp, and corrosive, by a stagnation of the animal juices through sloth and indolence; whose membranes are irritated by pungent salts; whose mind is agitated

by painful oscillations of the nervous system, and whose nerves are mutually affected by the irregular passions of his mind. This ferment in the animal economy darkens and confounds the intellect. It produceth vain terrors and vain conceits, and stimulates the soul with mad desires, which, not being natural, nothing in nature can satisfy. No wonder, therefore, there are so many fine persons of both sexes, shining themselves, and shone on by fortune, who are inwardly miserable and sick of life.

The hardness of stubbed vulgar constitutions renders them insensible of a thousand things that fret and gall those delicate people, who, as if their skin was peeled off, feel to the quick everything that touches them. The remedy for this exquisite and painful sensibility is commonly sought from fermented, perhaps from distilled, liquors, which render many lives wretched that would otherwise have been only ridiculous. The tender nerves and low spirits of such poor creatures would be much relieved by the use of tar-water, which might prolong and cheer their lives. I do, therefore, recommend to them the use of a cordial, not only safe and innocent, but giving health and spirits as surely as other cordials destroy them. (§§ 104, 105.)

From one point of view, the clue to this passage is 'mutually'. The effect of physical constitution upon moral behaviour had been the basis of the medicine of the humours; Berkeley sees a two-way traffic, and a moral characteristic, such as 'sloth', can operate through the nerves to effect 'a stagnation of the animal juices'. This may not have been new in Berkeley's day and is certainly not new today. But the importance of this notion in Berkeley is to be seen from the way it impregnates his style; that is, his thinking.

For Berkeley's diction, in *Siris*, is based upon a choice of terms which are nicely ambiguous in reference. We speak of a 'mild' purgative as we speak of a 'mild' disposition; and 'mild' therefore can be used so that the reader feels, in the word, the identity of the spiritual and the physical worlds. This is the sort of ambiguity which Berkeley exploits throughout *Siris*. Some such usage was commoner to his age than to ours. We, for instance, should not normally describe a 'cordial' as 'innocent'; for 'innocent' is a word we reserve to describe a spiritual state. In Berkeley's age, however, it carried the meaning we now express by 'innocuous'. Compare Donne:

The trepidation of the spheres,  
Though greater far, is innocent

— where the word has for us the force of a Latinate pun, though it

would not have had that force for Donne's contemporaries. On the other hand, 'cordial' retains, for us, both its connotations, and, as a noun, describes a medicine having certain properties, while, as an adjective, it describes human temperament and human behaviour. The word, therefore, implies, if we scrutinize it closely, an identity between the world of physical medicine and the world of the human spirit. But of course we do *not* scrutinize it closely. The metaphor, for us, is dead. In practice, the world of spirit can only be described by analogy from the world of appearance, of physical nature; and therefore all the words we use to describe the spiritual world are metaphorical in origin. But those metaphors are dead, for us. And it was part of Berkeley's achievement to revivify such metaphors, already dead in his time as in ours. In this way, he insisted, in each turn of phrase, on the identity which his whole train of argument was to expound. He took metaphors which had ossified into meanings, and by a slight change of focus clothed them with flesh to rise as metaphors once again.

I should not like to say that, in the passage quoted, his use of 'innocent' restored metaphorical force to 'cordial'. It does so for us, I think. But for the reader of 1744 'innocent' in this sense would have been more 'dead', more of a literal meaning, more usual and accepted than it is for us. But there can be no doubt about the first sentence of that paragraph. 'I fretted . . .', 'It galled me . . .', 'It cut me to the quick . . .': these usages would be dead metaphors in 1744, hardly less than they are today.<sup>1</sup> And the surprising felicity of 'stubbed' would enliven them in 1744 as it does now. The image is sustained and developed, almost like a conceit, from 'stubbed' to 'the quick'. And, paradoxically, as the 'fretting', the 'galling', and the 'feeling to the quick' take on a metaphorical life long lost, so the word 'stubbed' loses some of its life. At first it shocked the reader as a violent catachresis; now it subsides, and is seen to be no more metaphorical than the usage, 'feeling to the quick', which we have used time and again with no metaphorical force whatever. In the end, therefore, Berkeley's diction moves in an ambiguous field, neither plain metaphor nor literal meaning. And this equivalent territory is just what Berkeley requires for his chain which begins in physic and ends in metaphysic. The chain does not lead from one territory into another. Rather it is coiled and piled, physical or metaphysical according as we look on this coil or on that. There is really no question of going 'beyond'.

To say that the activities and the changes of the human sensibility are here *compared* with the activities and the changes of the skin of the hand, would be to miss the point. The two halves in the com-

<sup>1</sup> The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* finds this figure in North in the sixteenth century: 'Tigranes . . . was galled to the quick, and hit at the heart.'

parison are lost in a new compound which is neither one nor the other. It has been argued that this 'fusion' is peculiar to metaphor, and that all true metaphors act in this way. The drawing of a comparison, on the other hand, is the function of the simile, which is not to be distinguished from metaphor mechanically, according as the word 'like' appears or is omitted. And it would probably be true to say that 'stubbed' is subdued, by the resurrected metaphors which follow, not from metaphor to something less, but simply from catachresis to metaphor. In that case we have only proved that Berkeley's style is metaphorical in an exact sense.

But this is not all. The whole of *Siris*, we may say, is one great metaphor. At any rate, the metaphors throughout are drawn from one restricted field, a field which is proper to the medical speculation from which the first links of 'the small chain' were forged. Again, the metaphor is not, we have shown, a comparison. It cannot, therefore, 'work one way'. From the cuticle of the finger we work (with imperceptible rapidity), towards the human sensibility, as the cuticle of the personality. But equally we work from the sensibility to the finger. Thus when we learn (§ 92) that 'the animal salts of a sound body are of a neutral, bland, and benign nature', it cannot be said that the physical properties of the salts are expressed by analogy from the moral properties of a virtuous human temperament. 'Bland' and 'benign' are suspended between the physical order and the moral order, partaking equally of both, and implying that the two orders are not to be ultimately distinguished.

Of course this ambiguous vocabulary was not Berkeley's creation. It was largely the creation of the scientists of the seventeenth century. 'Cordial', as a medicine, is Chaucerian; and of course this ambiguity was the range of the alchemists, for whom a metal, for instance, could be noble or ignoble. Again, the vocabulary of the humours depended upon such ambiguities as 'melancholy'. And perhaps the most pregnant and momentous of the ambiguities was coined extempore by Bacon, when he chanced upon the word 'lex', with its moral connotations, to express his conception of what we now, following him, call 'scientific law'.<sup>1</sup> But the ambiguous vocabulary proliferated most richly in the hands of the natural philosophers of the Royal Society. The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* finds 'bland' first applied to inanimate 'things' in 1667. To call them 'inanimate' begs the question which such words as 'bland' success-

<sup>1</sup> BACON, *Novum Organum*, II, 2, cf. OWEN BARFIELD, 'Poetic Diction and Legal Fiction' in *Essays presented to Charles Williams*, pp. 124 and 125. Mr. Barfield points out that Bacon proposed for his novel conception the Platonic word 'forma', but in the course of this proposal he threw out the metaphor of 'lex'. The casual metaphor was adopted; the consciously proposed equivalent was dropped.

fully evade. So, too, the dictionary finds 'innocent' first used as opposed to 'malignant' by a pathologist of 1662; and 'benign' used of medicines in 1735.

These usages have had an interesting history. Some — 'bland', 'benign' and 'innocent', as applied to medicines — have merely disappeared. Others have been pruned of their ambiguity by dividing into two, as the seventeenth century 'melancholy' is now divided between 'melancholy' and 'melancholia', having caused many confusions in the process.<sup>1</sup> Others again retain their metaphorical power; what layman, hearing of a person afflicted with a 'malignant' cancer, does not feel a tug in the word, towards the idea of possession by evil spirits? And others again, like scientific 'law', sham dead, awaking again to dangerous metaphorical life, when least expected.

One would only claim for Berkeley that in *Siris*, whether by accident or design, he exploited this field of ambiguity with exceptional thoroughness and consistency:

The balsam or essential oil of vegetables contains a spirit, wherein consist the specific qualities, the smell and taste of the plant. Boerhaave holds the native presiding spirit to be neither oil, salt, earth, or water; but somewhat too fine and subtle to be caught alone and rendered visible to the eye. This, when suffered to fly off, for instance, from the oil of rosemary, leaves it destitute of all flavour. This spark of life, this spirit or soul, if we may so say, of the vegetable departs without any sensible diminution of the oil or water wherein it was lodged.

It should seem that the forms, souls, or principles of vegetable life subsist in the light or solar emanation; which in respect of the macrocosm is what the animal spirit is to the microcosm — the interior tegument, the subtle instrument and vehicle of power. No wonder, then, that the *ens primum* or *scintilla spiritiuosa*, as it is called, of plants should be a thing so fine and fugacious as to escape our nicest search. It is evident that nature at the sun's approach vegetates, and languishes at his recess: this terrestrial globe seeming only a matrix disposed and prepared to receive life from his light; whence Homer in his Hymns styleth earth the wife of heaven, ἔλoχ' οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος.

The luminous spirit which is the form or life of a plant, from whence its differences and properties flow, is somewhat extremely volatile. It is not the oil, but a thing more subtle, whereof oil is the vehicle, which retains it from flying off, and is lodged in several parts of the plant, particularly in the cells of the bark and in the seeds. This oil, purified and exalted by the organical

<sup>1</sup> Cf. AMY REED, *The Background of Gray's Elegy*.

powers of the plant, and agitated by warmth, becomes a proper receptacle of the spirit: part of which spirit exhales through the leaves and flowers, and part is arrested by this unctuous humour that detains it in the plant. It is to be noted this essential oil, animated, one may say, with the flavour of the plant, is very different from any spirit that can be procured from the same plant by fermentation. (§§ 42, 43, 44.)

Here the ambiguity is patent. It centres upon 'spirit'. The 'spirit' of the last sentence quoted I take to be a spirit as wood-alcohol is a spirit. This, too, presumably is the 'spirit' which appears in the first paragraph. But this is immediately qualified as 'too fine and subtle to be caught alone and rendered visible to the eye'. Yet this is not the immaterial spirit which equals 'soul'; for Berkeley guards against this conclusion by explaining, against his normal practice, that this identification is 'only metaphorical' — 'This spark of life, this spirit or soul, *if we may so say . . .*' But this is an old trick. The writer takes the precaution of 'if I may say so', but he knows very well that that disclaimer weakens little the metaphorical force; so he has it both ways. And so he is able to move at once to 'forms, souls, or principles' (with no disclaimer this time) to *ens primum* or *scintilla spiritiosa*. By this time, the spirit of vegetables is for the reader a spirit as an angel is a spirit; and this is cunningly reinforced by the 'luminous spirit' who soars into the last paragraph. Berkeley is safe. He 'means', logically, the spirit derived from light; but all the force of the locution derives from the disreputable, illogical part of the meaning, by which the 'spirit' is bright and shining as angels are. Finally, in a casual parenthesis, Berkeley returns to the 'spirit', as of wood-alcohol. And so, in the end, the reader has been inveigled into accepting an ambiguity as a meaning.

It may be argued of course that this is rank dishonesty, mere word-spinning. And perhaps, if *Siris* were a philosophical treatise, this would be all one could say. But the work is a chain of reflections. And one could argue that it has its own logic, the logic not of philosophy but poetry. For after all one is unable to say: 'This is the true meaning of spirit, in the terms of the argument. And this other is the fanciful meaning, which Berkeley, by vicious sleight of hand, passes off as the true.' For there is no argument, there is only the 'chain'. And there is not one level of rational discourse, another of metaphor. For all is metaphorical. What is to be made, for instance, of that nature, which 'at the sun's approach vegetates, and languishes at his recess'? Does it 'really' languish? Or is the expression 'figurative'? Truly, we cannot say. For in this world where 'spirit' is something comparable with wood-alcohol, yet also a soul, subsisting in the light, we cannot be sure about the languor in nature. Most

readers will feel at any rate that when Berkeley speaks of nature languishing, he means something less metaphorical, more nearly literal, than the modern speaker who says of a person that he 'vegetates'. And languour, too, it will be noted, belongs in this ambiguous territory where a moral and spiritual condition seems open to diagnosis by physicians.

Again and again, tar-water is described in terms which strike the modern reader as proper only to descriptions of moral or spiritual condition. It is 'unctuous', 'subtle', 'active'. It is (§ 49) 'gentle, bland and temperate'. And (§ 72) 'it is of so just a temperament as to be an enemy of all extremes' — phrasing which one could think to find in Hume, describing a moral man. So too, 'There is a lentor or smoothness in the blood of healthy strong people; there is often an acrimony and solution in that of weakly morbid persons'; and we cannot, perhaps we should not, dismiss the human and moral connotations of 'acrimony' from a passage which purports to be scientific accounting. The truth seems to be that for Berkeley here, if not for his age in general, the discrimination which we make between the scientific and the moral was unnecessary and positively unwanted. And that, we recall with a start, is what *Siris* is about. The means which Berkeley employed and the end which he proposed are one and the same. It is the definition of poetry. And perhaps this is part of what Yeats meant when he said that Berkeley the philosopher was 'a mask'.

## BOOK REVIEWS

KARL VIËTOR: *Goethe the Poet*, translated from the German manuscript by Moses Hadas. *Harvard University Press: Oxford University Press, 30s. net.*

This bi-centenary study by the Professor of German Art and Culture at Harvard is intended as a popular introduction to Goethe's poetry, drama and non-scientific prose. The plan of the book is roughly chronological, an unobtrusive account of the poet's life providing a factual background to a discussion of his works. The translation is a little awkward, and expressions like 'this resolute Yea', 'the will to augmentation (of Self)' or 'religio-moral, labor-directed types' distract the reader by making him speculate on the peculiarities of German learned style.

Yet apart from the way it has been translated this book, though neither original nor inherently difficult, does not make easy reading. Of Professor Viëtor's erudition, of his intimate acquaintance with the whole of Goethe's gigantic output (some 143 volumes in the Weimar edition) there can be no doubt. The arrangement of the material, too, is convenient and lucid; we are supplied with a wealth of quotations (both in German and in English) and the account of each work is illustrated by abundant and well-chosen references to other aspects of Goethe's writings. In all this lies the value of the present study, and as a comprehensive series of detailed précis of Goethe's works it may be warmly recommended. Its real defect is simple enough: it lies in the author's almost consistent refusal (reflected in his halting style) to follow up his thoughts beyond paraphrase and assertion. For no sooner are we given the *compte rendu* of, say, a poem ('Wave follows upon wave; the buds of spring and leaves of summer come, and then the wind wafts them away . . .') than the account is broken off with a 'splendid' or 'magnificent' or 'remarkable', and a new poem comes up for inspection. Once or twice we hear echoes of Viëtor's earlier important work on the theory of genres, and much (perhaps too much) is made of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, which is offered as a kind of humanistic leavening to the 'heroic presumptuousness of Faust'. But on the whole the book is neither thoughtful nor enterprising enough to accomplish the task it sets itself. For are we not, in a critical examination of a poet's work, entitled to expect, not a system, but a reflective structure, an organization less contingent than chronology?

This study is essentially uncontroversial; and it is the author's refusal to take thought (an outcome, one imagines, of his intention to be popular rather than of any decided views of his own), that lands him in a number of dubious statements, of which the following two are representative.

In his discussion of Goethe's attitude towards Beethoven Viëtor exclaims disarmingly, 'Who dares call the greatest lyric genius of European literature unmusical?' unaware, apparently, that there are two meanings to the word 'musical'; that the relation of the one (an image in the conventional language of literary criticism) to the other (the literal meaning) presents as genuine a problem of inquiry as does Goethe's attitude to Beethoven; a problem which, in the event, is uniquely solved but by no means permanently disposed of in some of the settings to Goethe's poems. This failure to see the problem in one instance involves Viëtor thirty pages further on in the assertion that Goethe's fragment *Pandora* 'approaches the form later called *Gesamtkunstwerk*'. (It may well be that Viëtor is here merely paraphrasing or repeating the gratuitous opinion expressed by at least four other Goethe scholars.) To compare this majestic torso — which, as a great critic wrote, 'reaches the highest summit of the German language' — with a Wagnerian idea of an opulent 'total work of art' (a sort of prototype of Aldous

Huxley's 'feelies') is to be blind to the closely wrought tension of its drama, to its poetic and philosophical significance, and above all to its total demand and exclusive dependence upon language as the sole repository of poetic experience. If it be objected that we are merely pitting one 'opinion' against another, it may be as well to quote a third. Goethe himself, it appears, was in no doubt about the difficulties of this, perhaps his most difficult work: 'Had I known beforehand what interest you would take in this work', he writes to his friend Zelter (6.6.1811) who had begun composing a shepherd's song from the poem and was unable to proceed, 'I would have treated my subject differently, and would have attempted to divest it of what makes it refractory to music and to the imagination.'

And secondly, there is the discussion of Goethe's 'pragmatism'. Throughout the book Viëtor is uneasy about what, in Goethe's work, is to be regarded as preceptive and what 'merely' as a portrayal of a given situation, but when he comes to the poem *Vermächtnis* he is in no doubt: 'The title makes it clear that the poet here wishes to utter an ultimate confession of the greatest importance.' (A title, says Goethe to Eckermann, 25.1.1827, has nothing to do with the making of a poem, to which it is added as a useful afterthought.) The muddled question of precepts apart, one poem may be better than another, but no poem can be more 'final' than another; for each poem is a model of the poet's whole experience, and there is ultimately (that is, when properly understood) only one criterion for the philosophical as well as for the aesthetic or literary importance of a poem. Viëtor does not give us such a criterion; nevertheless, we must agree that the poem is 'of the greatest importance'. What then is its philosophy? At this point Viëtor quotes the line '*Was fruchtbar ist, allein ist wahr*' ('Only that which is fruitful is true'), which he calls 'the concisest formulation of Goethe's pragmatism'. In pragmatism a fundamental distinction is postulated between the spheres of reflection and of external action or practical conduct; and the value of one sphere is determined by the other. Yet it is Goethe's consistent endeavour to break down the distinction between these two spheres, and to erect and illuminate a hierarchy determined above all things by the quality of men and of their doings. Indeed, one way of looking at his whole being as a man and poet is to see it in the light of this endeavour. What counts for him is the fruitfulness of all being; 'I have noticed that I believe *that* thought to be true which is fruitful for me, which links up with the rest of my thinking and at the same time brings me forward', he writes to Zelter some months after concluding *Vermächtnis* (31.12.1829). There is no 'ism' in which a total view of Goethe's work could be ensconced. The very poem Viëtor discusses shows the unique validity and hence also the precariousness of Goethe's situation between 'the old and true' doctrine of being and the new and 'fruitful' message of becoming. To describe this situation one needs an openness of mind and a trust in the poetic experience of life, a trust at once greater and more discriminating than that which Viëtor shows here. But perhaps the second volume, on Goethe as scientist and philosopher, will fulfil the expectations raised by the first.

J. P. STERN

E. N. DA C. ANDRADE: Isaac Newton. *Max Parrish, 6s. net.*

Professor Andrade, whose interest in the early history of science is well known, has written a charming little life of Newton in a series called Personal Portraits. I have not seen others of the series but this is excellently printed and well illustrated in proportion to its modest size. It seems to be intentional that these biographies should be written by men thoroughly devoted to their subjects, and therefore it is natural to find Professor Andrade presenting Newton in that light which will most arouse the sympathy and interest of his readers, and it would be improper to criticize this attitude. He very ably brings out the magnificence of

Newton's scientific work, but when he says that it is impossible to understand Newton's nature and essence, does he include his character? For here he seems to incline to a definite partiality. While it is true that Newton was afflicted at one time by nervous disorder and that he was not personally responsible for the opening of the great quarrel between the English and continental mathematicians, it must not be forgotten that he viewed with complacency and even benevolence the attacks of his friends upon those who, like Flamstead or Leibniz, were unfortunate enough to stimulate his irritability. The argument that 'we must make allowance for genius' has no force in a discussion of Newton's life, because his supporters (who included the great majority of English scientists) made none, and accepted his moral judgments as if they had been as rational as his scientific. There can be no doubt that Newton was a great man and one of the half-dozen greatest among men of science, but he cannot be made to fit the rather benign, conventional pattern of greatness.

A. R. HALL

RAYMOND WILLIAMS: *Reading and Criticism. Frederick Muller, 6s. net.*

The adult movement, like every other branch of education, suffers from the fact that too many people are ready to utter generalities about its aims and purposes and to philosophize over it in a vacuum of high ideals and good intentions. It is only comparatively rarely that the man on the spot, the tutor in contact with students, has the opportunity to come down to the particulars of his vocation and to deal in concrete terms, and at a reasonable length, with its techniques and problems. This new series of books, in which the volume under review is one of the first to appear, should provide just such an opportunity, but it cannot be said that Mr Williams has taken full advantage of it.

This is not so much a criticism of Mr Williams, however, as of the plan of the series into which his book has to fit. The dust jacket says that this series 'will be found particularly useful by students and tutors of the extra-mural departments of the universities, of the local authorities' further education schemes, of such voluntary bodies as the Workers' Educational Association and Adult Education Centres and in Technical Colleges'. Moreover, 'in each case the purpose of editors and author has been to provide a short introduction to study of practical use for students in organized classes or engaged in private study'. I suggest that no one book of just over one hundred and forty pages can satisfactorily meet the needs of this diverse audience, or rather, of these diverse audiences.

The first two chapters competently summarize the dire situation of the general reading public which the literature tutor must always take into account when facing a class today. There follow two chapters on criticism and analysis generally, two devoted to more detailed examination of verse and prose, and another to the analysis of a complete work, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The approach here is a familiar one, and stems from the work of I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis in particular, as Mr Williams does not hesitate to acknowledge. But it is useful to have it between the covers of a single book. Moreover, it cannot be too often reiterated that the business of a tutor and a class engaged in the study of literature must be founded on a close examination of actual texts. There are too many tutors who are in themselves walking examples of what Mr Williams calls 'Guides to English Literature in Twenty-four lessons'. But adult education, in the field of literature, should be a training in critical awareness rather than in the history of literature, not only for the individual's sake, but as an answer to those critics who can see no 'social purpose' in literature as a subject of adult study. For a training in critical awareness will contribute as much to the quality of the individual as the study of politics and economics, especially if this training

is undertaken in the give-and-take of the class discussion, and will certainly do more to combat what Priestley has called the 'gigantic *uneducating* influences' of our day than a hundred pious homilies on 'adult education for social responsibility'. And that is surely a praiseworthy 'social purpose'.

Mr Williams concludes the discursive part of his book with a chapter on drama which is too short to be of much value, and a final chapter on 'Literature and Society' in which he is concerned, and rightly, to combat the tendency to make literature the handmaid of social studies.

It is in the first Appendix, a series of extracts for analysis, that the difficulty of suiting the book to so varied an audience as the editors envisage is most obvious. Mr Williams says that 'the most suitable means of following these exercises is, of course, through group discussion under a qualified tutor'. This is tantamount to admitting that this part of the book, at any rate, is not for the private student; and in fact the private student who could undertake these exercises adequately, presented as they are *in vacuo*, would hardly need the general guidance which Mr Williams offers in his early chapters. The book ends with a draft syllabus designed for a four year tutorial class; but since one tutor is hardly ever likely to be satisfied with another's scheme of work, I will refrain from commenting on it.

D. S. BLAND

ERICH EYCK: Das persönliche Regiment Wilhelms II. *Eugens Rentsch Verlag. Erlenbach-Zürich.*

The contents of this imposing volume lack the thread of continuity which would make it an adequate sequel to the author's life of Bismarck and a match for that in importance. It is not a political biography of Wilhelm II nor does it perhaps altogether justify its sub-title of *Politische Geschichte des deutschen Kaiserreiches von 1890 bis 1914* in the sense of competing with the relevant part of Ziekursch's and Wahl's comprehensive works. It is preponderantly devoted to foreign affairs; out of thirty-nine titles in the list of abbreviations for the most frequent references all but eight are exclusively concerned with diplomacy and these eight are periodicals cited mainly in that same connection in the text. The treatment of domestic politics seems designed primarily to explain the embarrassments of a regime with other main preoccupations and which was in the last resort constitutionally proof against opposition majorities. Of course political history to which, as distinct from cultural and economic history Herr Eyck limits himself, does not in itself explain Wilhelmine Germany; the monolithic nationalism of 1914, and not the strength of the Left in the Reichstag was the significant result of half a century of growing cultural uniformity and economic progress. And it is relevant to the theme of the book that this unpolitical success story was not deeply affected by the caprices of the Kaiser's personal government — although economics in particular probably depended more than in any other country upon government below the autocratic level.

The preoccupation of the Kaiser with diplomacy in preference even to the other royal but more exclusively professional subjects of military and naval affairs naturally accounts for the proportions of Herr Eyck's book. This same balance of interests is indeed in the Kaiser's favour on the war guilt record since, as Herr Eyck points out, he realized his own inability to act as Warlord and was therefore far from planning the 'continuation of diplomacy' which would oblige him to give way to professionals. As a narrative of German diplomacy not merely an examination of the Kaiser's neurotic interventions in it, Herr Eyck's work is a skilful but hardly original addition to the literature of war guilt. He writes as a liberal democrat, denouncing the practice of imperial government and its agents in Austria-Hungary as well as Germany, almost as if he were himself identified with this past era of frustrated parliamentarism. For him

as for all liberals with historical allegiances, conservatism is the enemy and social democracy merely a radical sect. The shadow of Bismarck is not allowed by his biographer to obtrude except where his stabilizing domination is contrasted with the mediocrity and restlessness of the next generation of Junker politicians. For Bülow, who predicted that he would die a liberal and happened to owe his dismissal to the extreme Right, Herr Eyck has a soft spot, and he also shows some sympathy for Bethmann as not being, at any rate, one of the 'aristocrats' at whom he makes a point of sneering. The type of these he finds in Berchtold who has been perhaps the leading choice of historians as a war criminal, and who is incidentally one of the few main 'accused' who has not published his memoirs.

Herr Eyck's condemnation of German foreign policy is bound up with his exposure of imperial prerogative. The fault was not so much in purposeful malignancy, such as characterized the self-made dictatorship in charge of the next eruption of militant German nationalism, but rather an almost incredible thoughtlessness and inconsequence which led Germany into the paradox of an aggressive war without war aims. As a statement of the case against the diplomacy of the Central Powers Herr Eyck's last protracted chapter is by itself highly effective, but it is a prosecutor's case and does not manage to improve on the brief which Professor Renouvain provided more than two decades ago. Herr Eyck deals fully, as he should do, with Austrian as well as German policy in 1914 and with the efforts of Grey whom he unconditionally respects. But the confused motives and actions of the equally hysterical autocracy at St Petersburg are left blank, except for the case of the premature mobilization for which the standard and indeed plausible excuses are made. Nor is the problem for Austria-Hungary of reckless Serbian irridentism seriously weighed. It is questionable whether the theme of war guilt can be usefully discussed in this way on the basis of the evidence available to only one country's (i.e. Germany's) government at the time. The thirty-year-old controversy, which has been responsible for the publication of the general evidence from all sides, has established the convention that it should not be used in such a way, but that all the Great Powers' external relations should, so far as possible, be examined together so as to elucidate their reciprocal misjudgments of one another's policies as well as the putative vice or virtue of those policies taken in themselves.

M. VVYVAN

*The Three Parnassus Plays (1598-1601)*. Edited, with an Introduction and Commentary, by J. B. Leishman. *Ivor Nicholson & Watson*, 42s. net.

Three dramatic variations on an academic theme, written and performed in a Cambridge college (St John's) at the turn of the Elizabethan century: the first two seemingly destined to an early oblivion, while the third is printed in two editions, 1606, and several times since: the earlier plays rediscovered in MS. and a complete edition of the trilogy published in 1886: an abridged version based on this text performed in the same college, 1949: and now a new and definitive edition of the three plays prepared by Mr Leishman. Such is the skeleton history of these unique undergraduate comedies with which the sixteenth-century University stage reached its highest vernacular accomplishment.

It is a matter of some wonder to the present reviewer that the distinction is nowhere sharply drawn between the form and style of the first of these plays, *The Pilgrimage to Parnassus*, and that of the two parts of *The Returne from Parnassus* which complete the trilogy. *The Pilgrimage* has an internal unity of its own and quite apart from its two sequels which, in comparison, are loosely bound and divide clumsily; and, where the rest meanders jerkily from incident to incident, its smooth development and ingenious conception give it at once the pride of place among the plays. Through the form of a graceful allegory we follow the progress

of two students, Philomusus and Studioso, through the four lands of Logic, Rhetoric, Poetry and Philosophy (the local *quadrivium*), to their Parnassian goal and the 'laurel crown' of a degree. Each land has its peculiar distraction for the students, personified by a wayward scholar 'effecting to diuert vs from our waye', and the four encounters give the play its substance. First Madido's 'pint-pot' Logic: 'This Parnassus and Hellicon are but the fables of the poetes, there is noe true Parnassus but the third loft in a wine tauerne, noe true Hellicon but a cup of browne bastard'; then Stupido's Rhetorical puritanism: 'Studie not these vaine artes of Rhetorique, Poetrie and Philosophie: there is noe sounde edifying knowledg in them; why, the[y] are more vaine than a paire of organs, or a morrice daunce. If you will be good men indeede, goe no further in this way, follow noe longer these profane artes, that are the raggs and parings of learning, sell all these bookes, and buye a good Martin, and two or three hundreth of chatechismes of Ieneuas printe, and I warrant you will haue learning enough.' With some misgivings the students resist these enticements, but Amoretto's seductive poetry, is for the moment, overpowering:

Ile bringe you to sweet wantoninge yonge maides  
 Wheare you shall all youre hungrie sences feaste,  
 That they, grow[n]le proude with this felicitie,  
 Shall afterwards all maner object scorne.  
 Nor are they puling maides, or curious Nuns  
 That strictlie stande vpon virginities:  
 Theile freele giue what ere your luste shall craue  
 And make you melte in Venus surque[d]rie.  
 These ioyes, and more, sweete poetrie affordes

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But even this apple turns rotten at the picking,

Howe sourelie sweete is meltinge venerie:  
It yealdeth honie, but it straigthe doth stinge.

and in the final encounter of the pilgrimage the students are confronted with the disillusioned graduate Ingenioso's Philosophy: 'If youe be wise, and meane to liue, come not there. Parnassus is out of silver pitifullie, pitifullie . . . Apollo is bankroute, there is nothing but siluer wordes and golden phrases for a man; his followers wante the goulde, while tapsters, ostlers, carters, and cobblers haue a fominge pauch, a belching bagg that serues for a cheare of est[ate] for *regina pecunia*.' Undaunted even yet, Philomusus and Studioso leave us as they sight their goal, optimistic in their conviction that 'though it wantes coyne it wantes not true contente'.

The two parts of *The Returne from Parnassus* tell the sadder, harsher story of the graduates' struggle to obtain a gentle livelihood in an unkind world. Their swift disenchantment on leaving the University is reflected in the writing by the change in style from allegory to unsoftened satire (may not this be the explanation of the words from the Prologue to *The Returne Part Two*, 'then penning their return with ruder quill', upon which Mr Leishman bases an unconvincing case for a new author at this point?), and from here it is Ingenioso who sets the pace and tone of the plays. He (probably a pen-portrait of Nashe) has already in *The Pilgrimage* predicted the world's unkindness to scholars which hereafter it is the object of the plays to emphasize, made explicit in the third Prologue;

To you we seeke to shew a schollers state,  
His scorned fortunes, his vnpyttied fate.

and ruder language sustains this ruder theme. We follow the three graduates through the stages of their disillusionment: Philomusus and Studioso first as sexton and tutor respectively, then in their pose as a French doctor and his assistant, next trying their fortunes as actors ('and must the basest trade yeeld vs reliefe?') to their ultimate resignation as shepherds on the downs of Kent; Ingenioso ('for the husbanding of my witt, I put it out to interest, and make it returne twoo Phamphlets a weeke') alternately courting and reviling potential patrons as his fortunes wax and wane, and finally in flight to the debtors' sanctuary on 'the Ile of Dogges'. Other characters mingle in the scenes, the haves and have-nots of this world, brought before us for our censure or our sympathy: the shopkeepers, burgesses, gentry and tradesmen mercilessly cudgelled with 'thwack thwack tearmes' by unrewarded scholars. A delightful sequence of scenes, thrust into the third play as it were in parentheses, and explaining its sub-title, *The Scourge of Simony*, brilliantly satirizes the preferment to a living of the rich, uncouth Immerito at the expense of the poor, scholarly Academico. He, as the play ends, is returning 'to my Cambridge cell againe' as the others make their several departures from London and the world.

That cheatest vertue of her due desert,  
And sufferest great *Apolloes* sonne to want.

If, remembering that *The Pilgrimage* is by far the shortest of the plays, a disproportionate amount of space has here been devoted to its story, this is because it receives in Mr Leishman's elaborate Introduction so little notice. 'In each of the three chief forms of Elizabethan and Jacobean satire', he writes (p. 45), 'the influence of Classical models, important though it was, has been greatly exaggerated and the continued presence of purely native and medieval elements strangely overlooked . . . Behind them all, he [the reader] will feel, far more powerfully than that of Horace or Juvenal or Persius, of Plautus or Terence or Theophrastus, the presence of that allegorical and realistic representation of the Seven Deadly

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**BASIL BLACKWELL**

Sins and their followers which is as old as the medieval pulpit and the medieval homily.' But while tracing this 'native' influence in its less obvious form on the second and third plays, Mr Leishman himself 'strangely overlooks' the fact that *The Pilgrimage* is conceived essentially in the form, though not completely in the spirit, of a morality. This play might be called the undergraduate's *Everyman*, the junior scholar's *Microcosmographia Academica*; and what has been said of Cornford's satire applies equally to *The Pilgrimage to Parnassus*: 'Its content has its roots in no changing historical situation, but in human nature.'

The second and third plays Mr Leishman relates to that revolt of, in particular, University and Inns of Court men which expressed itself in a 'sudden outburst of formal satire and satirical comedy which distinguishes the last years of the sixteenth century . . . a reaction against the earlier romanticism and idealism: a disenchanted resolve to be at all costs realistic, to see things and show things as they really are, and to describe them (as Jonson put it) in "language such as men do use"' (p. 42). In this the comedies most certainly reflect their age, but it is unwise to associate their author too closely with this movement and to attempt to identify him, as the recent editor of 'The Poems of Joseph Hall' (A. Davenport, Liverpool University Press, 1949) has done in the name of his subject, on the basis of analogy in style. If the two parts of *The Returne* are flavoured with the literary mannerisms of Hall, Marston, Jonson and Nashe, so is *The Pilgrimage* with those quite different mannerisms of Spenser and Sidney. This may indicate the differing sympathies of two separate authors, but, if the changed mood and tone of the latter plays does not fairly account for the 'ruder quill', a further suggestion may be entertained. We have already noticed that the first play stands apart as a model in construction, while the others manifest signs of more hasty composition. Suppose *The Pilgrimage* was received, as is likely, with great enthusiasm and delight by the collegiate audience, and earned a *Plaudite* rich with cries of 'encore' and 'bravo', is it not likely, when the festivities of the succeeding Christmas were being arranged in the College, that some may have approached the successful author with a request for a 'second instalment'? The second and third plays, which tell a story beyond the experience of their undergraduate author and which he must have drawn from the secondary source and hearsay evidence of contemporary writers, might then, quickly and carelessly composed to satisfy popular demand, require the given apology of the 'ruder quill'.

We are continually exhorted not to take these plays over-seriously. 'Spectators', pleads the Prologue of *The Pilgrimage*,

Spectators, take youe noe seuer accounte  
Of our twoo pilgrims to Parnassus mount.

and the third Prologue re-echoes him,

What [ear] we shew, is but a Christmas iest,  
Conceiue of this and guesse of all the rest:

The *Parnassus* plays emerge as an Elizabethan equivalent of the modern pantomime, with the same leavening ingredients of rude wit and rough wisdom, the same absurd reality, and the same sharp but cheerful criticism of their age. It is thus a little surprising, to find them here bolstered up with a long and scholarly Introduction, and bandaged with an exhaustive Commentary. The technique of scholarship brought to bear upon them gives the comedies at once an aura of academic respectability which they could not desire and hardly deserve: so dressed, they are in some danger of becoming merely a rewarding text for tireless students, when they also hold in store a refreshing treat for tired spirits.

Yet, in whatever form, the reappearance of the *Parnassus* plays is a most welcome event, for the edition of 1886 (with all its apparent imperfections) is now

## BOOK REVIEWS

something of a rarity; and he would be a grudging critic who made their present accoutrement a platform for ingratitude. Mr Leishman has saved them again from a threatening oblivion, and has enriched our appreciation of them by his careful scholarship. If the form, and cost, of the present edition threatens to confine the plays to Library shelves only, would it not now be a simple and rewarding labour to reissue them in one of those handsome and cheap editions which so excellently serve the cause of English literature and drama?

M. W. STEPHENS

PERCY M. YOUNG: *The Oratorios of Handel*. Dobson, 18s. net.

This book should be interesting for musicians and readers whose studies do not incline to Handelian research, not only because of its scholarly integrity and thoroughness, but because of its discussion of aesthetic issues which have a bearing on musicology in general. The first two chapters on Italian 'origins' and 'Handel in Italy' are engrossing, although the subject matter does not exhaust all that is known, and the first chapter about the composers of the Oratory of St Philip would give occasion for a long article. The vocabulary is, however, one of the book's chief merits, being somewhat Huxleyan, but much room is left for speculation about musicians like Viadana, composer of 'concerti ecclesiastici', Ariosti, known from Berlin to London according to La Rousse, the Gabrieli, whose use of multiple choirs initiated a Baroque ornamental conception of sacred music and revealed wider ranges of tonal effects, which we find for the first time in England in Handel's 'Deborah'. These, and many others, Villaert, Ingegneri, Soriano, composer of *Pasiones*, Peri, Anerio, make the period prolific with significant names.

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the simple fact that Palestrina was installed by one Pope in the Sistine Chapel and excluded by a later Pontiff, whose aim was to abolish laymen's occupation of offices in Rome.

Such misapprehensions, the lack of an index for reference, of bibliography and discography lead me to observe another omission. Dr Young 'buried his thoughts', to quote his illustrious poet-predecessor of the same surname, in Handel's England, about the sources of Handel's Germanic idioms, and has not given us German pendants to the Italian chapters. Handel cannot have become a Cathedral organist and composer without musical nourishment: church attendance was compulsory in his days for everybody. Born in Halle, he had as models the artistic achievements of his townsmen Froberger, and Scheidt. Froberger cultivated the French *agrément*s in addition to counterpoint, Scheidt encouraged the love of Swelinek, and the musical realism of French and Flemish *Nederländer*s like Jannequin's war and hunting songs. It is recorded that Handel was influenced by the style, orchestration and dynamics of Buxtehude whose 'Abend-muziken' and 'concerts spirituels' made the organ-playing and church cantatas of this Dane in Lübeck worth a pilgrimage on foot and a prolonged stay without leave for young Bach. Buxtehude, whose seven suites have influenced Holst's Planets, was a mystic, savant, artist and poet, and some chapters devoted to him and to other composers of the stature of Reinicke, Kuhnau, Telemann, and to the early French School and Flemish 'mysteries' would have illumined Handel's creative processes in composing oratorios: for example 'Saul', where Schutz's 'Symphoniae Sacrae' in seventeen parts 'mysterious and wondrous' have evidently affected what Mr Young writes, is the 'clairvoyant' music of Handel.

Handel's *vérisimo* was a latent heritage and mutual quality with the French school in which the contemporary composer, Rameau, shone as clavecinist, and his pictorial delineations of nature's workings, although constituting some of the most surprising marks of his style, do not establish him as the first harbinger of romanticism. We read from Dr Young that English music is perversely rooted to literary ideals, and in consequence disliked abroad. Yet the 'Messiah' and 'Esther' derive from Pope and Klopstock, whose 'Messiah' was begun in 1728, and Racine, and are universal masterpieces by one whom Beecham calls a European composer with an international style and technique.

H. M. HARVEY

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All the qualities are there which distinguished all his teaching and all his writing. There is the range of his knowledge — a range which is needed in a study which begins with mesolithic savages and ends on the eve of that century which Clapham made so peculiarly his own. But there is depth as well as range. There is the mastery of industrial techniques we always expect of him; he knows that ten or twelve hours a day over a hand-loom will warp the breast bone. There is the command of detail of all sorts — the explanation of Scotland's traditional taste for claret; the generation which realized that potatoes would not poison the pigs; the price of Mr Pepys's beaver hat, and what that price meant in terms of a skilled

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workman's wage. There is the astonishing wealth of details of this sort, though they are packed in without congestion and with an apparent ease. Comment may be sparse, for generally the detail is so chosen that it speaks for itself. But where there is comment it is generally penetrating, as in his characterization of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century yeomanry. 'They were efficient by the standards of their day; they were also "land-hungry, profit-hungry"'. They had the qualities and the defects of those eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ironmasters, coal-owners and mill-owners who so often — like the Peels — came of yeoman stock.'

Qualities such as these, which we have come to expect of everything Clapham wrote, have never been better exemplified than in this *Concise History*. About that, I feel, there will be no disagreement. On the other hand, there may be room for discussion as to whether these qualities, great though they are, take us quite far enough. Let us take one example of the way he builds up a picture, creates an impression. Speaking of the sixteenth-century enclosure movement, he writes: 'All that the facts prove is that, in a considerable number of places and no doubt for various reasons, owners or farmers liked to have more sheep.' Some of the places are enumerated; some of the reasons are illustrated — and London's demand for mutton is not forgotten. Hard, solid facts are heaped up to create the impression: the impression is vivid, real, incontestable. Yet it is also without dimensions: we are given no measurement of the significance of the places, the weight of the various reasons, the meaning of enclosure in the economy of the nation. It may be true that the character of the evidence at our disposal makes it impossible to measure most of the phenomena which are the province of economic history. It may be desirable, none the less, that an attempt should be made to compel our evidence to yield a quantitative, even a qualitative answer to our questions, at least if we are ever to understand the process of economic change in the past. The very terminology of economic history may depend for precision upon such an attempt being made. A 'capitalist' in the Chester of Edward I and a 'capitalist' in the age of Darby and Wilkinson were different men in a different world. Without some measurement of these differences there is a real danger that the word 'capitalist' will cease to be descriptive, will cease to have meaning.

These last remarks, however, simply state the problems which economic historians of today and tomorrow must face about the future of their subject. The very existence of such problems arises in no small measure out of the fact that economic history has grown to be such a formidable body of knowledge. A very great part in the amassing of that formidable body of knowledge has been played by Clapham himself; and in this *Concise History* he has also presented to us the distilled essence of his own work and the work of many others. There is nothing like it as an introduction to economic history, just as once there was nothing like Clapham's lectures.

EDWARD MILLER

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

*The inclusion of any book in this list does not preclude its review in a later issue.*

WINSTON H. F. BARNES: *The Philosophical Predicament. A. and C. Black, 10s. 6d. net.*

GEOFFREY BRERETON: *Jean Racine. Cassell, 22s. 6d. net.*

W. L. BURN: *The British West Indies. Hutchinson's University Library, 7s. 6d. net.*

R. J. HARRISON CHURCH: *Modern Colonization. Hutchinson's University Library, 7s. 6d. net.*

W. H. B. COURT: *Coal. H.M. Stationery Office, 21s. net.*

HERBERT DINGLE (Ed.): *A Century of Science. 1851-1951. Hutchinson's Scientific and Technical Publications, 15s. net.*

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- GUIDO M. GATTI: Ildebrando Pizzetti. Dennis Dobson, 10s. 6d. net.
- A. V. JUDGES: *Education in a Changing Society*. University of London Institute of Education: Evans, 1s. net.
- FERGAL MCGRATH: *Newman's University, Idea and Reality*. Longmans, 30s. net.
- SARAH GERTRUDE MILLIN: *The People of South Africa*. Constable, 20s. net.
- SWAMI NIKHILANANDA: *Ramakrishna, Prophet of New India*. Rider, 21s. net.
- ALEXANDER PALLIS: *In the Days of the Janissaries*. Hutchinson, 18s. net.
- MICHEL POIRIER: *Christopher Marlowe*. Chatto and Windus, 10s. 6d. net.
- ALEXANDER POPE: *Epistles to Several Persons*. Edited by F. W. Bateson. Methuen, 25s. net.
- H. G. RAWLINSON: *A Concise History of the Indian People*. Oxford University Press, 9s. net.
- THOMAS M. RAYSOR (Ed.): *The English Romantic Poets, a Review of Research. The Modern Language Association of America: London, Geoffrey Cumberlege*, 17s. 6d. net.
- T. F. REDDAWAY: *The Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire*. Arnold, 25s. net.
- R. L. GRAEME RITCHIE (Ed.): *France, a Companion to French Studies*. Methuen, 30s. net.
- HERMANN SCHERCHEN: *The Nature of Music*. Dennis Dobson, 18s. net.
- ELIZABETH SEWELL: *The Structure of Poetry*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 25s. net.
- RUTH LYDIA SHAW: *The Vindication of Metaphysics, a Study in the Philosophy of Spinoza*. Macmillan, 12s. 6d. net.

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